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ABSTRACT

This book, consisting of 13 papers, deals with the theory, practice, and reactions to participatory research in the area of social research for development. Included in the volume are the following papers: "Breaking the Monopoly of Knowledge: Research Methods, Participation, and Development," by Budd Hall; "Creating Alternative Research Methods: Learning to Do It by Doing it," by Paulo Freire; "The Militant Observer: A Sociological Alternative," by Rosisca Darcy and Miguel Darcy de Oliveira; "Persons, Not Respondents: Alternative Approaches in the Study of Social Processes," by Michael Pilsworth and Ralph Ruddock; "A Critique of Monopolistic Research," by Rajesh Tandon; "Participatory Research or Pretense? Reflections on the Research Phase of an Indonesian Experiment in Non-Formal Education," by Nat J. Colletta; "The Ambiguities of Peasant Participation: Problems of Participatory Research in a Non-conventional Education Project in Senegal," by Oliver LeBrun; "Research as Education for Development: A Tanzanian Case," by Marja-Liisa Swantz; "Research in the New Communities Project: An Urban Housing Estate in England," by Paul Fordham, Geoff Poulton, and Lawrence Randle; "Peasant Participation, Adult Education, and Agrarian Reform in Chile," by Francisco Vio Grossi; "One Step Forward: A Community Project in Northern Canada," by James A. Draper; "Agricultural Farm Workers' Union in India," by Kalpana Tandon and Kawaljit Singh; and "Ambiguities in Participatory Research," by L. Dave Brown. (MN)

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Creating Knowledge: A Monopoly?

Participatory Research in Development

Participatory Research Network Series No. 1

edited by

Budd Hall
Arthur Gillette
Rajesh Tandon

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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New Delhi
June 1982

Budd Hall
Arthur Gillette
Rajesh Tandon.

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Social
Science

Introduction

Budd Hall, Arthur Gillette and Rajesh Tandon

This book looks at current doubts about and innovations in social research for development. That is, it deals with subjects that are knotty, controversial and complex. We feel it best, therefore, to begin by offering academic and lay readers alike a firm handle—a concrete example.

The Jamaican *Drama for Progress* project of the early 1970s was a small but significant example of what our solemn-sounding subject, participatory research for development, is really about. *Drama for Progress*, sponsored by the Jamaican National Commission for Unesco, sought to motivate rural illiterates to enrol and stay in classes being organized by the burgeoning National Literacy Campaign. At the outset, it did this by mobilizing secondary school students interested in drama to write and put on comic playlets and skits with a pre-literacy message in village squares, market places and sports fields around the country.

The project's importance lay, however, not in its original approach, or even in the fact that it attracted dozens of enthusiastic young playwriters/actors and hundreds of equally enthusiastic spectators. Its significance was, rather, to be found in what went *wrong* and how the project (organizers and students, but also illiterate villagers) went about setting it *right*.

Despite all the initial enthusiasm, it soon became clear that: (a) villagers came to the plays because they had little or no alternative entertainment; and (b) the pre-literacy message was just not getting across. Why?

Apparently because no matter how committed the student volunteers were, they were putting on theatre *for* the villagers. Form : The stilted accents and stiff posturing learned while

studying Shakespeare in urban class-rooms made the students themselves (rather than their plays) the spectacle villagers came to laugh at. More importantly, content : the reasons the organizers and students thought the villagers should become literate, and around which they built plays, found no echo among the villagers.

The project sponsors realized their messages were not being communicated. After reflection, they took the plunge beyond paternalism and sought to navigate between the Scylla of demagogy and the Charybdis of prudence.

Who knew better what jokes would arouse the villagers, what themes would strike sparks of recognition and what plots would entice them into literacy classes, than the villagers themselves?

The first step was to consult them. Students spent hours listening rather than talking, taking notes rather than giving (even joke-coated) lectures. The result was new jokes, themes and plots, which the students attempted to forge into more relevant playlets.

But non-communication persisted.

So the students took a second and longer step. If the makings of the plays were to come from the villagers, why should not the villagers themselves write and perform the plays? That is what happened.

Leaving aside the lethargy of "C-A-T spells cat," a number of literacy classes reorganized themselves around the preparation of skits as their core activity, onto which the three Rs were wound—thus taking on an immediate utility and an attractive function. For these classes, "graduation" became the presentation of a play written and acted by new literates to their astounded (and still illiterate) neighbours. For the first time, these poor and oppressed peasants found themselves—literally and figuratively—on-stage. In the wings, students provided, but did not dictate, organization and logistics.

The project had evolved from the translation of knowledge from the "educated" to the "ignorant" to the generation and transmission of knowledge as a people-to-people process, which included the students learning from the villagers.

The *Drama for Progress* story is not one of those idyllic fairy stories that people the pages of so much fanciful development reporting. In fact, it had a sad ending: premature

discontinuation. Not that the axe fell-because the project had evolved from paternalism to participation.

In this project, theatre—and ultimately literacy—was a means, not an end. The end was knowledge, and thus power. The project's evolution did not merely offer the villagers access to already existing (and thus alien) knowledge. It enabled them to create and disseminate their own knowledge. Doing so, it was not a sharing of power but a creation of new power.

This book is then about the politics as much as the methods of social research for development.

Social scientists and educators have joined together in recent years to produce evidence of the continuation of widespread poverty and its associated problems. A recent ILO economic report on one country in Africa indicates that the living conditions in 1977 were, for the major part of the rural population, the same as at the beginning of this century. 'Development' has resulted in an improved quality of life for a very small number of people in Third World Nations and a large number in the developed countries. Continuing evidence of the decline in the share in world trade by Third World countries gives increased ause for concern to countries tied into an international marketing system. The strategies and plans for development have not produced the stated goals.

It is accepted more and more that the purpose of development must be to spread or shift the benefits of economic growth from the few to the many. The "targets" of the strategies now being put forward by international agencies and national governments are officially announced to be the poorest segments of society: the landless labourers of Asia and Latin America, the subsistence farmers of Africa, the inhabitants of the shanty towns of most world capitals and even the poor of the more industrialised nations. 'Development' is being redefined with increased recognition that fundamental structural transformations are necessary. Simplistic formulas for improvements based on increased production, industrialization and reforms of schooling have been brought over more sharply under criticism.[1] If 'development' means radical transformation of society, it also implies a struggle. It implies pressure by the poor on the rich, by wage labour on the owners of the means of production, by landless labourers on landowners.

Research and research institutions play an important role in the development of national and international strategies for social transformation. Research is used by the ruling classes to justify or maintain unfavourable or exploitative positions. But, by the same measure, if research is playing an increasing role in the development of new strategies of control, it can at the same time be used to provide both an alternative analysis *and* a means of expanding the base of analysis to include most exploited sectors of society.

Research in social science generally, as in research in adult education specifically, does not exist in a vacuum. It is mediated by social, economic and political forces. As Orlando Fals Borda has remarked (after seven years of politically committed scientific research in Colombia):

> "The special tools of our trade have been and are the frames of reference and techniques with which successive generations of scientists have endeavoured to interpret reality. However, as is well known, these tools do not have a life of their own, but rather take on the meaning which we give them, along with consequent effects in varying fields of life and knowledge. We cannot disregard the social, political and economic impact of our work. Consequently, we must know how to select for our own ends, that which is in harmony with our vision of social responsibility and, at the same time that which satisfies our life experience."[2]

Persons involved in research who are at the same time committed to a fundamental transformation of society have found many of the tools of empirical social science to be inadequate to the task. It has been all too easy for us to slip into intricacies of increasingly sophisticated control of variables at the expense of solutions of real social problems. We have, at the same time, through use of language and styles of work, removed ourselves from direct involvement with the poor in our investigation processes. This concern and awareness goes far beyond the academic critics of development. In speaking of the challenge to social sciences, the Director-General of UNESCO has noted that, despite an initial growth of awareness, "international institutions have underestimated the complexity of the social and cultu-

ral factors involved."[3] Social science has divided itself into specialized divisions, none of which can explain in a holistic fashion any given social phenomena.

The steady movement, historically, has been for research to move from a systematic set of observations and comparisons to increasingly technical interpretations of reality. This has had the effect of transferring the power of creating knowledge to those who possess the technical skills seemingly required by the paradigm in use. The worker in a Latin American factory or the landless Asian labourer or the poor African peasant is not among those who are authorised to create knowledge. Their ideas will never be read in the journals or discussed in the conferences, let alone in the economic planning ministries where government policies are being set. And yet the papers and reports of researchers from national universities or even from other countries will be read and perhaps influence others even if they are written about the same LATIN AMERICAN factory or African/Asian villages.

The concern of politically committed researchers with linking research and action *with* the poorest classes or groups has combined with a concern by other researchers who have become disillusioned with the results of positivistic research to produce a search for alternative approaches. These alternative approaches have taken a different shape and vary somewhat epistemologically.

The use of the term *investigacion yaccion* which has grown out of the Latin American experience of the past ten to fifteen years, represents perhaps the richest source of recent ideas. Similarly, Paulo Freire's presentation of 'Thematic Investigation' has perhaps received the most widespread attention.[4] A growing body of persons are looking beyond this to concepts of 'militant' observation of research.

Participatory research

We have used the term 'participatory research' to group the several examples of research in this book. We have chosen the term in order to emphasize the necessity to involve those persons who are the supposed beneficiaries of research in the entire research process. We are specifically talking about the partici-

pation of the working classes, the peasants, the exploited and the poor in an analysis of their own reality.

But in putting forward another term, we are not suggesting that there is a new orthodoxy. We are not substituting one research formula for another. We are suggesting that the search for more accurate and consistent explanations for social and political realities must involve those persons who for years have been the objects of our collective research.

This book is a forum, an invitation to adult educators, social scientists, political activists, and those otherwise involved in political and social transformation to think, to write, to contribute to the dialogue. We have not presented just a series of success stories. In fact, the problems which the research projects discussed here encountered were in many ways much larger than the successes. We are at this stage convinced of only two things: that the concerns embodied in participatory research offer the best forum for a more effective social science, and that we have many more questions than answers.

We have questions such as:

—How is research of this nature initiated?
—What are the links of this work with political organizations?
—What is participation?
—How can control of research be effectively maintained by the poor?
—Given the economic realities, where does an urban worker find the time to become involved in work of this nature?
—What is the most effective balance of theoretical formulations and praxis?

Reading over what has been written, we have the author's usual doubt: have we been clear? Clarity is in simplicity. But participatory research for development, because it is a recent concept and expressed in diverse practice, is cloudy and complex.

Perhaps, however, what we want to say is not so nebulous or complicated after all.

A true story: Once, a huge lorry entered a road tunnel. The tunnel's roof was a centimetre lower than the lorry's. The lorry became stuck in the tunnel entrance. Traffic was blocked and chaos soon reigned on the surrounding highways.

The police experts arrived, the fire department experts arrived, the tunnel experts arrived, the traffic experts arrived. They pondered, conferred and pondered again. But no one could think of a way to get the lorry out of the tunnel—short, that is, of dismantling the lorry, the tunnel entrance, or both.

Then a small boy stepped out of the crowd that had gathered. "Why don't you let the air out of the tyres?", he asked.

The experts reddened with embarrassment, let the air out of the tyres, and so freed the lorry.

Over the last two decades, research components of development proposals and research departments of development studies have perhaps been as blind as all those experts.

After an initial sense of discovery, sometimes verging on or into arrogance, a malaise set in. Then frustration. And finally doubt. And the malaise, frustration and doubt drove the researchers to see 'The Answers' almost everywhere: bigger budgets, better trained staff, more refined instruments, more sophisticated designs, improved communication with decision-makers, expanded research on research, new generations of computers...

(We say this with more humility than irony, having been involved in the process to a certain degree).

Now the quest for the answers has reached crisis proportions. And the researchers seek them in a frenzy; seek them almost everywhere; *almost* everywhere. Everywhere, it would seem, except where they are most likely to be found: with the people who are being researched.

This book is organized in three parts. The first part presents five theoretical papers on the different aspects of the theme. Some of these papers are an expression of frustration with what is currently predominant. Others show an alternative route. The second part of the volume presents seven case studies from the different parts of the world. These cases vary in context, content and style. They each suggest a different perspective while describing the specific case. They appear to be diverse, though they are on the theme of Participatory Research in Development. The last section consists of a reaction to the papers/cases/concepts presented in the earlier two parts. It raises issues, provides support and opens new directions. The reader is encouraged to go through the book in this sequence.

It is not possible to list the names of all the people who have

assisted in the preparation of this volume, yet a collection of this sort is possible only through the efforts of many across the world. Our thanks are due to all of them.

May, 1981

NOTES

[1]R. Dore, *The Diploma Disease*, London : Allen & Unwin, 1977; ILO Reports on Kenya *Education, Employment and Equality*, Geneva: ILO, 1977.

[2]Orlando Fals Borda, "For Praxis : The Problem of How to investigate Reality in order to Transform it", paper presented at Symposium on Action Research and Scientific Analysis, Cartanaga (Colombia), 1977.

[3]A.M. M 'Bow, *Moving Towards Change*, Paris; UNESCO, 1977, p.97.

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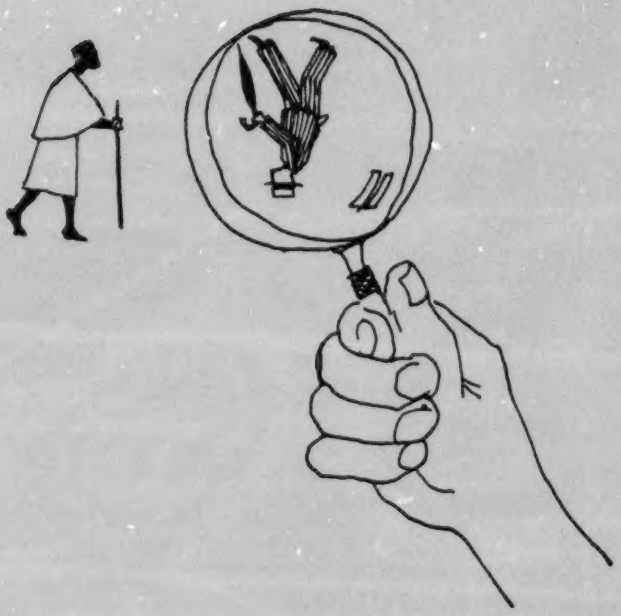

PART I
THEORY

1

Breaking the Monopoly of Knowledge: Research Methods, Participation and Development

*Budd Hall**

> People cannot be developed; they can only develop themselves. For while it is possible for an outsider to build a man's house, an outsider cannot give the man pride and self-confidence in himself as a human being. Those things a man has to create in himself by his own actions. He develops himself by what he does; he develops himself by making his own decisions, by increasing his understanding of what he is doing, and why; by increasing his own knowledge and ability, and by his own full participation—as an equal—in the life of the community he lives in.[1]
>
> Julius Nyerere

> Research is always and by logical necessity based on moral and political valuations, and the researcher should be obliged to account for them explicitly.[2]
>
> Gunnar Myrdal

Background

Thinking about development—and about the role of social research in development—has evolved dramatically of late. The still-prevalent idea that development occurs by being injected from the "top" down toward the "bottom" of a society is now widely questioned. Development is increasingly seen as an awakening at the "bottom," i.e., a catalytic process of freeing

*This chapter was written especially for the present book.

the creative forces of the improverished and exploited of any given society and enabling those forces to come to grips with the problems of underdevelopment. According to the earlier view, it was expected that development could be designed by planners and scholars from afar, then delivered by technicians and cadres; often, indeed, the mass of peasants and others most affected by underdevelopment tended to be seen as a kind of problem that the experts had to solve. Under the new view, the people are not the problem, they are the solution; at least, the solution is seen to be latent within them.

With the shift in thinking about development has come a general questioning in all fields of development—related social science about the way in which research is conducted and, in turn, about the over-all values from which research proceeds. In the field of adult education, this discussion has been particularly rich. A growing number of researchers are exploring new methods. It has been suggested that their experimentation derives from three main concerns:

1. The concern that quantitative research methods are not providing an adequate understanding of complex reality;
2. The desire for practical research that can be used as a base for setting policy and developing programmes which will promote social justice and greater self-reliance;
3. A view of human behaviour which sees individuals as active agents in their environments rather than as passive objects to be researched.[3]

Purposes and forms of research

Most social science research carried out in the Third World (and elsewhere) is related to either of two purposes. First, the need and desire of administrators and policy makers to gather information from those who do not make decisions in order to make decisions for them. This happens at both the national level, as government ministries attempt to 'solve' various problems of underdevelopment, and at international levels as intergovernmental agencies attempt to offer solutions as well.

The second purpose relates to the researcher's own economic needs. For a man working in a university or research institu-

tion, knowledge is the only commodity available to sell. He gathers or 'mines' ideas and information in order to survive. His priorities go to collecting data at a central point, summarizing it and then packaging it in such a way that journals, books, seminars, international conferences can consume it. Policy makers represent an obvious and major market for the ideas and information. The need to serve the people from and about whom the information has been gathered (the unemployed, the villagers, the students, the teachers), is of low priority. These groups will not buy the results—and perhaps did not want the research in the first place.

The forms of research which have developed, have been shaped by these two purposes. Quantitative research has been an attempt to summarize social information in a form that is convenient and that, most importantly, readily lends itself to transfer and dissemination. This has been seen as a necessity as society has become more complex and as decision-making has been pulled ever farther from most people's grasp. But this chapter is not an attack on numbers. Numbers in and by themselves are not the problem. There is now and will be a need for all kinds of census information (although the absence of national statistics in so many fields in China gives rise to speculation about even this). The fundamental question is: who has the right to create knowledge?

The vast majority of all social science research done anywhere in the world represent one aspect or another of either experimental designs, comparison of case studies, anthropological (participant observation) or survey methods of various kinds. Most of this work has been characterized by a desire for objectivity and scientific accuracy. All of these methods have been characterized by the fact that problem formulation, analysis and knowledge creation converge in—and are therefore controlled by—the persons initiating the process.

Of these approaches, by far the most common is the survey approach based on a process of problem formulation, hypothesis construction, 'instrument' construction (usually some form of interview or questionnaire), collection of data, analysis of data and interpretation of data. The last few years' experience and frustrations of national and international researchers working in the Third World—and the resultant evolution of their thinking

—have brought to light several shortcomings of the survey research approach.

What are the weaknesses of the most commonly used research methods?

A number of drawbacks can be identified. They are the more serious since some 90 per cent of studies done in the fields of education and development in recent years have followed the survey research approach, although a variety of other research approaches exists and could have been used.

The survey research approach oversimplifies social reality and is therefore inaccurate

Instrument construction is often arbitrary; such specific tools as semantic differential tests and various other tests devised by those who work from a primarily psychological point of view often express class bias. Moreover, a research process that extracts information from individuals in isolation from one another and aggregates the information into a single set of figures may do so at the expense of oversimplifying the complexity and richness of human experience. Responses to problems offered by groups of people are not necessarily the same as the sum of individual responses of people speaking alone. It is, of course, correct to say that the use and interpretation of the figures 'depends on the institutional and social context within which the research is embedded.'[4] Still even in an institutional framework that encourages popular participation or control of decision making, the representation of interviewees' perceptions by a set of figures such as '22 per cent of those interviewed said that their home environment has had the most influence on their career choice,' or '42.16 per cent of teachers report problems' is blatantly inadequate. The illusion of accuracy through numbers has been prepetuated by many of us researchers. Unfortunately, this illusion obscures—or mystifies—reality.

A second way in which survey research oversimplifies reality is by forcing choices, i.e., by asking the wrong questions. Information is sought through interviews or questionnaires which provide a pre-set framework for the responses.

For example, people may be asked what is 'most influential,' 'least satisfactory', 'first choice' or 'most responsible.' But attitudes, decisions and behaviour do not reflect a single rank-ordered cause or group of causes. The curious fact is that all of us have experienced this false choice. We have often filled in forms or questionnaires and have felt the desire to say, 'that really isn't the right question.' The forced choice approach becomes a fetish in some educational research. This was seen in one case where a 'diagnostic tool' was being employed to help in the analysis of new adult students. Potential students of English were asked to choose the form of literature in which they were most interested from a list that included novels, short stories, poetry, drama and non-fiction. What of the respondent who did not know the difference between the forms (this is likely enough in modern literature), and wanted some of all, or was curious about a particular historical period?

A third reason why one-time surveys oversimplify is their presentation of a static picture of reality: a photograph of a group of people with neither a past nor a future. The very fact that the survey is ahistorical is a severe limitation; social change is a continuous process—a dialectic or linear movement (depending on one's point of view) in time. The way people respond on one day under one set of conditions by no means guarantees they will have a similar reaction at another time.

Survey research is often alienating, dominating or oppressive in character

Many social scientists assume that their research is neutral. Does it, however, seem probable or even possible that the design of a research project or questionnaire can *not* reflect, consciously or otherwise, the designer's own values and ideology? Interviews worked out in university department or adult education institution are, by nature, one-sided. The survey research approach regards people as sources of information, possessing bits of isolated knowledge needed by the researcher. But interviewees are neither expected nor apparently assumed to be able to analyze a given social reality. In extreme instances, researchers take up people's time with badly formulated questions and make interpretations based on little experience in the area

or social class of interviewees. The results of their research provide the basis for policies or programmes which are then expected to be useful and relevant to the interviewees!

Research approaches of this kind often create the illusion among those from whom information is obtained that research is rigorous, highly technical, scientifically 'pure' and that the work can only be done by those who are university-trained. The abilities of people to investigate their own realities are not stimulated or developed. Those whose daily existence is most affected by ill health, poor nutrition, low levels of production or failures of educational provision are effectively excluded from formulating the changes which might lead to improvements. Control is left to those who by virtue of training and responsibility levels, are unfamiliar with the experiences within which change is sought.

One large-scale example of this was noted in the Unesco/UNDP evaluation of the Experimental World Literacy Programme. The emphasis on a large-scale, internationally comparable survey design resulted in a situation where few national researchers were viewed as competent to carry out the type of evaluation needed. The resultant instruments not only grossly oversimplified the relationship of literacy to economic development (an admittedly narrow linkage in any case) but were designed in a very biassed fashion. For example: under the general heading of 'transformation of the milieu,' indicators were devised for testing changes in literates' behaviours in the following categories: means of production, volume of production, monetary income, income in kind, consumption of durable goods. These indicators say virtually nothing about vital behaviours concerning social, political or cultural transformation even though pertinent data were available in certain project evaluation... In one country, where per capita GNP is less than $ 200, the criterion of increased consumption was broken down into indicators that included safety razors and wrist watches.[5]

Survey research is not conducive to subsequent action

Much research in adult education is intended to result in action. It may attempt to determine a community's educational needs or to modify an existing adult education programme. In

either case, it is often expected that, when subsequent changes are made, the people of the community or the students in the adult education programme will participate more actively or more efficiently than before, or will gain increased benefits of some kind. It is a basic principle of planning that the likelihood of full and effective participation in any venture—educational, political or social—is improved by involving would-be participants in the decision-making process. Research which has alienated respondents, or at best treated them as sources of raw information, has little likelihood of creating a human environment conducive to change.

Survey research methods are not consistent with the principles of adult education

The arguments put forward so far would contribute to a general critique of social science research. In the field of adult education, there are additional specific criteria to be met in selecting an appropriate research approach. To begin with, adult education is rooted in an especially strong concern for social justice and equality. Concern for the adult learner is often sysnonymous with concern for the proportion of the population that has not had, for various reasons, a fair share of either national wealth or social services. In Africa, Asia and Latin America, adult education is directly linked to attempts to increase participation of citizens in national development and to provide a minimum level of basic education to all people.

A reading of any or all of the basic adult education texts, such as Kidd, Knowles or Miller, would produce a set of basic principles such as:

(a) Programmes should be based on adult needs;
(b) Adults are more able to articulate their learning needs than children;
(c) Although adults' ways of learning change with age, the phrase 'too old to learn' is a fallacy;
(d) Adults often work out quite complex learning strategies to achieve desired goals on their own.[6]

These principles, and many others, imply a faith in adults as mature persons participating actively in the world. It is no secret that the implementation of actual programmes very often

falls short of these principles; but the principles do exist and should serve as a basic guide for adult education research. John Holmes has suggested that if educational research had been working with adults instead of children, current doubts about research methods would have arisen much earlier as adults tend not to be so passive as children[7].

Instead, we find that the dominant research methods in use today, and the ones being generated as adult educators begin to do more and more research, are alienating, inaccurate as a means of identifying needs, and stem from the assumption that certain adults are marginal or incapable of articulating their own needs. Research in adult education is at an early stage of development. We still have time to select research approaches that suit adult education uniquely and thereby keep us one step ahead of other social sciences, which are now in the throes of questioning and attempting to replace unsatisfactory approaches.

Alternative strategies

Here and there around the world, work has been done to define ways of changing and improving social science methodology. The following brief overview of recent significant literature on this subject shows, like an unfinished mosaic, that the search for alternatives is in a preliminary phase and has, in any event, not yet become a comprehensive and coherent movement.

A general dissatisfaction with orthodox approaches has been expressed in the work of Blumer[8]. Qualitative, as opposed to quantitative, strategies have made their strongest entry with Glaser and Strauss[9]. Filstead's introduction in *Qualitative Methodology* provides a useful discussion substantiating the need for alternatives[10]. Pilsworth and Ruddock have described an alternative approach based on a phenomenological position.[11] Still other approaches have borrowed from anthropology and stress the value of participant observation[12]. Beltran has outlined convincingly the Western bias in social science research methods[13]. Callaway has similarly singled out the cultural trap which researchers are prey to when attempting allegedly objective research in non-Western cultures[14].

From Africa comes the work of Swantz and, in some sense, Malya with his approach to providing follow-up literacy material and investigation of a literacy environment[15]. In Latin

America, Freire provides useful ideas in chapter three of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and a bit more in a talk given to the Institute of Adult Education in the United Republic of Tanzania.

Vio describes some attempts at peasant participation in Chile under the Allende government. Beltran and Gerace have developed important concepts of communication among peasants rather than to them[16]. These concepts of 'horizontal communication' are important links. In addition to Freire, Pinto has elaborated the forms of thematic investigation[17]. Within the field of sociology, the de Oliveiras have put forward a compelling set of similar ideas in *The Militant Observer: A Sociological Alternative*.

Participatory research

Although very diverse, the above-mentioned authors do show a tendency to combine community participation in decision-making with methods of social investigation. This combination could be called participatory research. The term refers to the efforts in several spheres to develop research approaches which involve those persons who are the expected 'beneficiaries' of the research. The term deliberately focuses on involvement of those who are traditionally the objects of research in the entire research process itself: formulation of research design, collection of data, interpretation of information. With the support of the International Council of Adult Education, so many researchers in several countries are defining and experimenting with formal and informal ways of developing different aspects of participatory research. Some of the guidelines that have emerged from these efforts to date are:

1. A research project—both process and results—can be of *immediate and direct benefit* to a community (as opposed to serving merely as the basis of an academic paper or obscure policy analysis).

Research cannot be justified solely as an intellectual exercise or as a justification of academic career-building. It is important that the community or population gain not only from the *results* of the research, but from the *process* itself. This means, for example, that community members should *by participating in the research process*—be better able to articulate problems

themselves and to initiate the search for solutions. In concrete terms, the reports of youth research in the United Republic of Tanzania by Swantz[18] and the agrarian reform work in Chile stress that the entire research team should contribute to the productive work of the area. Such an approach has the added advantage of creating a better atmosphere and providing the outside members of a research team with the possibility for closer involvement with the community.

2. A research process should *involve the community* in the entire research project, from the formulation of the problem and the interpretation of the findings to planning corrective action based upon them.

This is perhaps the fundamental principle of participatory research and its point of most radical departure from both orthodox research approaches and such improvements as grounded theory. The research should be based on a system of discussion, investigation and analysis in which the 'researched' are as much a part of the process as the researcher. Theories are neither developed beforehand to be tested, or drawn by the researcher from his or her involvement with reality. Reality is described by a community as it develops its own theories about itself. Research teams would need to include villagers, farmers and unemployed persons, as well as educators or titular local leadership.

3. The research process should be seen as *part of a total educational experience* which serves to determine community needs, and to increase awareness of problems and commitment to solutions within the community.

From this point of view, research becomes an integral part of educational planning and indeed, broader development planning. It could thus become an acepted method of raising interest and increasing motivation. Various techniques of stimulating initial involvement in research and thus self-education have been used including photographs in Peru (and elsewhere), and theatre in Jamaica (Drama for Progress) and Botswana.

4. Research should be viewed as a *dialectic process*, a dialogue over time, and not as a static picture of reality at one point in time.

Carr-Hill makes a compelling case for using questionnaires —typically static instruments—for consciousness raising[19]. His

point is that, precisely because questionnaires are biased, they can be used positively to create an awareness and to awaken in individuals powers of analysis which can then be brought to bear on the problem. I would agree with this point, but would want to make certain that, in a participatory research project, several additional conditions are met.

The first is that the questionnaire represents only the first stage of the analysis, the basis for several discussions and interactions with the respondents, so as to achieve the above mentioned "dialogue over time". Secondly, that the interpretation of the questionnaire data not be performed solely by a single social scientist, but it be a joint activity involving respondents. Thirdly, one would want any action resulting from the research process to be determined by a group larger than a social scientist and his or her bureaucratic counterparts.

I have spoken of using questionnaires so as to 'prove the rule' of the above enunciated guideline by describing the exception. The point is that, whatever the information-gathering instrument or technique, the gathering and interpretation of information should be viewed as a continuing activity characterised by two mutually re-inforcing kinds of dialectic: (a) interaction between community and researchers, and (b) interaction between gathering and interpretation, with the information gathered fuelling interpretation while, in addition, interpretation yields new needs for information that must be gathered. In this way, the chances of producing a stilted, static and unidimensional image of reality are reduced.

5. The object of research, like the object of education, should be the *liberation of human creative potential and the mobilization of human resources* for the solution of social problems.

This is a value statement, an underlying assumption for participatory research which may well not suit everyone. But then this type of research will perhaps not be acceptable to all in any case. The point of intersection of research, learning and socioeconomic development should be the same—man. The more intellectual power and creativity that can be brought to bear on society, the more likely will be solutions to its problems. What is needed? More highly trained and sophisticated researchers operating with ever-more esoteric techniques? Or whole

neighbourhoods, communities and nations of 'researchers'?

An analogy to medicine may be appropriate here, although only partly so. Social science research often appears to replicate a situation in which a doctor tries, in silence, to diagnose a patient's symptoms from behind an asceptic and opaque screen. The doctor measures the patient's responses through a long stethoscope (the social researcher's orthodox survey approach) and his main concern is to develop a longer and better stethoscope for going over or under the screen. But the real need is for the doctor to set aside the stethoscope, walk around the asceptic opaque screen and begin talking with the patient. It is, after all, the patient who knows best what hurts and where.

I said this analogy was only partly appropriate. That is because, precisely in the light of the man-centered guideline for research, the researcher should not consider him or herself to be a doctor ministering to a sick person. Rather, both researcher and 'researched' should be viewed as partners in a joint venture of human liberation and mobilisation.

6. Research has *ideological implications*. There are two points involved here. First is the re-affirmation of the political nature of all we do, especially in adult education. Knowledge is power. Research that allows for popular involvement and increased capacities of analysis will also make conflictual action possible, or necessary. It may, for example, be necessary at a certain time for the researcher to choose to side with one group or another within the community. The use of the term 'participatory research' will not prevent someone from using similar methods to help a group of slum landlords work out a set of 'tenant-proof' rules. It may be necessary to make the choice to work only for the tenants at an early stage. What is reality for landlords, and perhaps even some government officials, is not necessarily reality for tenants.

Conclusions

We have created, and are still creating, a situation in social science research which effectively denies recognition of the knowledge-generating abilities innate to every human being in the world. In our search for techniques of adding to the 'body of knowledge', we have lost sight of the objectives of our work: people. Science is not a bag of tricks that one learns by being

trained to remove oneself ever farther from reality. We have created an illusion and we have come to believe in it—namely, that only those with sophisticated techniques can create knowledge. This should remind all social scientists of the crucial need not to forget that, whatever they do, they must keep a steady eye on their own values. This is especially so of participatory research workers.

Participatory research is not a set of ideas that can be applied at random with predictable results. It is not neat, it cannot be rounded off to two decimal points, and it is even difficult to translate into charts. It does not eliminate the need constantly to evaluate the political implications of one's work. It provides no guarantee for ideological or scientific purity (does anything?). What it does is to offer an alternative way of conceiving and executing research which may suit both the needs of our work and our own values more closely, while serving more faithfully the interests of those with and for whom we work.

NOTES

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ITS BETTER BY BUS

2

Creating Alternative Research Methods: Learning to Do It by Doing It

*Paulo Freire**

One of the first problems that we are faced with when we are interested in knowing some aspects of a given reality, either that of a rural area or of an urban one, is to know what the concrete reality is. Secondly, there is the question of what we consider to be the concrete reality in that area.

The concrete reality for many social scientists is a list of particular facts that they would like to capture; for example, the presence or absence of water, problems concerning erosion in the area. For me, the concrete reality is something more than isolated facts. In my view, thinking dialectically, the concrete reality consists not only of concrete facts and (physical) things, but also includes the ways in which the people involved with these facts perceive them. Thus in the last analysis, for me, the concrete reality is the connection between subjectivity and objectivity; never objectivity isolated from subjectivity. If I come to the United Republic of Tanzania to do research, I know this reality completely only to the extent that I understand the dialectical relation between the subjectivity and objectivity in this area, that is, when I begin to know how people in this

*This chapter consists of exerpt from an oral presentation given by Freire at the seminar 'Studies in Adult Education' conducted at the Institute of Adult Education, University of Dar-es-Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, on July 20, 1972. The text, in slightly edited and abridged form, is reprinted with permission of the Institute.

area perceive themselves in their dialectical relationships with the objectivity.

Let us suppose that a rural area presents a problem of erosion, or of insects, which has resulted in the destruction of crops. I only know the actual phenomenon of erosion, or insects, to the extent that I also understand how the peasants perceive this phenomenon.

In my view, it is necessary to start an investigation with a concern to try to understand the dialectical relations between subjectivity and objectivity. If I perceive reality as the dialectical relationship between objectivity and subjectivity, then I have to use methods for investigation which involve the people of the area being studied as researchers. They should take part in the investigations themselves and not serve as the passive objects of the study.

If, as a sociologist, I think of myself as a neutral or impartial scientist, I will view both people and reality together as the object of my research. Thus, I analyse them as if the world were a morgue in which a body is dissected.

This is not for me. I have to go back. Instead of taking the people here as the object of my research, I must try, on the contrary, to have the people dialogically involved also as subjects, as researchers with me. If I am interested in knowing the people's ways of thinking and levels of perception, then the people have to think about their thinking and not be only the objects of my thinking. This method of investigation which involves study—and criticism of the study—by the people is at the same time a learning process. Through this process of investigation, examination, criticism and reinvestigation, the level of critical thinking is raised among all those involved.

Thus, in doing research, I am educating and being educated with the people. By returning to the area in order to put into practice the results of my investigation, I am not only educating and being educated; I am also researching again, because to the extent that we put into practice the plans resulting from the investigations, we change the levels of consciousness of the people, and by this change, we do research again. Thus, there is a dynamic movement between researching and acting on the results of the research.

I think it is important to point out again that the scientists'

question is essentially an epistemological one. This, of course, implies a particular ideological way of thinking and a political choice. This is true regardless of whether it is clear to the scientists or not.

Two sets of objectives

Let us take two sets of objectives which are political and ideological. Let us suppose that I am working as a social scientist in the modernisation process of a country. In this case, it is seen as the modernisation of the structures of society in order to improve the efficiency of production. It is not in the interests of the ruling class to involve the people as subjects of their change in the transformation of the structure of society. The preoccupation is a bourgeois, capitalist one. It is the policy of this capitalist society, both economically and culturally, to emphasize modernizing society. But in this process of modernisation, there is no interest in involving the people as authors of the transformation. Educational projects exist only to offer those few clues necessary for more efficient production. The people are to be transformed into good producers, but with only that additional education necessary for implanting the system in their heads.

If I think only in terms of productivity, then my tendency will be to emphasize that technology is neutral, technical education is neutral. I will attempt to convince every single person of this. It means that work is not discussed politically; it implies that to do so would be a waste of time. We need good workers so they have to be trained in technical skills: how to use machines in the best way in order to improve the country's productivity. This is a bourgeois policy—the capitalist method.

It is deplorable to find people who call themselves socialists thinking like that. This is a total contradiction. If you read the writings of Nyerere, you will discover that Nyerere's policy is different. Even though Nyerere has not written about this directly, by reading what he has written, I can sense what he thinks of this. When he speaks about the meaning of development, for example, he says : 'Just as I cannot develop a man, a woman, a person, unless he or she develops, I can also not develop a nation without people.' It is necessary to understand all the implications of this statement, one of which is that education

for the workers has to be a political event and not an exclusively technical one.

If the objective is very clear, as in the United Republic of Tanzania, if people here are interested in creating a socialist society, then research requires different methods and concepts of knowledge and different organization. People have to participate in the research, as investigators and researchers, not as mere objects. Of course, most social scientists say that to the extent that we invite people to participate in the research about them, we are interfering with the scientific method; that is, we are interfering in the research process and the results will not be in a pure form—as if it were possible to have any kind of results in social science in a pure form! When the very scientists who emphasize this concept are at home trying to write up reports, they cannot escape from their own subjectivity. Their subjectivity is interfering with the 'pure form' of the findings. In the second place, the very physical presence of the researcher in the field interfers with the reality there.

A suggestion for the United Republic of Tanzania

Based on such thinking, I have thought about the possibility of the Institute of Adult Education at the University of Dar-es-Salaam trying something in this perspective, with some very clear objectives.

For example, if it fell within the interests, convictions and facilities of the Institute, a research project might be developed which would not only provide experience in alternative research strategies, but would also be a challenge to the entire University in its relations with the people. A team, presumably having a clear understanding of Dar-es-Salaam, would choose a kind of mixed rural/urban area, an area in transition, in which to do research in order to try to develop an adult education programme.

First of all, the team should acquaint itself with all previous research—no matter what method had been used. The team would also need to explore all possible secondary sources. Secondly, the team should try to understand or to delimit the area geographically, recognising, of course, that there are no frontiers, culturally speaking. The team would also try to identify possible popular and official institutions like, for example,

football clubs, dancing clubs, or co-operatives. The team would go to these popular institutions in order to talk with their leaders.

There should be no dishonesty in the conversation. The team would say: 'we work for the Institute of Adult Education in Dar-es-Salaam and we have come here to discover with you the possibility for all of us to hold discussions and work together.' This means that if the people of this area do not accept this proposal then we cannot work. What we mean is that we would like to discuss the realities of the area with the people. We would like to summarize these discussions.

This process would continue until the point is reached where everyone involved, the university people and those from the area, together feel they understand the realities of the area and can formulate a plan of action. We then say to the people: 'What do you think about it?'

Suppose the people say: 'Yes,' there will be a discussion. The team would have a meeting not only with the leaders but with the people who are engaged in some way with that institution. The team would proceed in this manner with each institution in turn. What happens next?

The team would try to have a series of discussions once a day for, say, a week. The length of time would depend on the schedules of the various people involved. They would sort out with the people the topics to be discussed and the place in which to hold the discussions. Let us suppose that there are five to six rooms in which to hold meeting. If each room holds perhaps 30 people, then 160 people could be engaged in discussions at the same time. The discussion groups might involve as many as 1,500 inhabitants. It is very important for us to have a perception of the whole.

When the people have agreed, the team would come to each group with one or two representatives of the Institute's sociologists, psychologists or educators. Records of the discussions would have to be made. The team should not go to the meetings with an already prepared list of questions. At the beginning of the meeting, a chairman would be elected by the group. The role of the team would be an advisory one and they would begin to discuss the concrete conditions of that area with each group. What do they think about education in that area ? For example:

Are there enough primary schools? Are they good or bad? Why? Everyone should be involved in the discussion.

The objective and the procedure

We have to be very clear about the objective of this work: it is the people themselves, not the advancement of science. If, however, the people are silent, then we have to provoke them, because we are not neutral.

We might discuss for one hour the subject of education, for example, and find out just how the people see education. At this point, education ceases to be merely a question that the University or the Ministry thinks about. Education now starts to become something quite concrete, because the people are talking about it. If I am to discuss education with the people, then I have to start from their perception of education and not from my own perception. This is a mistake that we have made in many instances. We have to admit that we often labour under the opinion that we possess the truth. By discussing education, a lot of other subjects appear, of course, and we begin to provoke the team to go on with the discussion.

Let us assume that five groups have been functioning each time a discussion is being staged. After perhaps five meetings, the team itself says: 'we don't want to discuss these questions further. We have analysed how we now see these realities.' Justice, education, the government, industries, and many other topics, have been discussed.

At this point the groups, each with its reporter, would have a general session of the 160 people and the researchers together. In this general assembly, each reporter would speak about the reality of the area, reporting the results of his group's perceptions of the situation. The reporter, if possible, should be one of the people themselves and not one of the researchers. (The researchers can be advisers, of course). In my view, it is better that the reporter comes and speaks full of confidence so that the people will see that they have been able to do what previously only officials, researchers or specialists had done.

I would quote here Mao Tse-Tung: 'More and more the intellectuals must become workers; more and more the workers must become intellectuals.' Thus if we really want a socialist society, let us stop intellectualism. Let us begin to believe in

the possibilities of the people, even if they display many deficiencies. We also have many deficiencies.

Let us return to our hypothetical case. Assume that the reporter of Group A makes the summary of the discussions the people have had. A general discussion on the report would follow. As each reporter makes his or her report, there is collective discussion.

The next stage

At this point, the next stage of the research—the critical study of the people's discourse—begins. We have to understand the multiple implications that are discovered in the collective discussions. For example, by studying these implications, the people's levels of perception of reality can be determined. In order to do this, of course, we need to put the discussion on paper, so that the members of the groups and the groups of researchers can have an account of the discussions in all five groups. In studying these implications, the people also need to be present. This discourse cannot be analyzed by the researchers alone. The reporters, acting as representatives of the people, should work side by side with the social scientists.

At this stage, the Institute of Adult Education could ask for the collaboration of other departments in the University. It might invite lecturers from the political science department to help the Institute in its interpretation of the discourses. Some economists could be invited, and so on.

This method of research might also introduce the University to direct communications with the people as equals in an investigatory process. Some of those who are elitist may be fearful and say that this is the destruction and corruption of the University. But if they are not elitist, but really revolutionized and committed, they will say: 'This is fantastic. Now I have the people within the University.' In the last analysis, this is a pedagogical project.

The presence of a linguist is extremely important in such an analysis in order to analyse the semantic aspects of the language, and the syntax of the people. Sometimes, when people use the same words that we use and we have the feeling that the people are using these words in the same context and understand our meaning, they are, in actual fact, thinking of some-

thing different. For example, a certain team proved through linguistic analysis that when the workers—at least the peasants —said *trabajo*, which means 'work,' they were not saying what we understood by *trabajo*.

By 'work,' I understand 'praxis', or the action of human beings working. For them, work was something like a magical entity as if it were outside the range of activity. They used expressions like: 'There are people who were born for work; there are others who are born for no work.' We found many examples. Therefore, it is very important for us to understand the semantic differences between us and the people.

The final stage

The last stage of this hypothetical project would be for the team, together with the people, to draft a proposal for subsequent action. This proposal would deal with the provision of adult education.

When there is a possible action programme to be drafted, it would be necessary to return once more and hold another meeting with the 160 people to discuss the plans which resulted from the analysis of the research. People would discuss the programme, accept it or reject it, and would possibly add to it. After this, one could start the programme with the people, not for the people. In this way, ministries could also be engaged. Not only the Ministry of Education, but also those for Agriculture and Planning. In other words, we have to recognize that development is a global process; we have to start on different levels of Government and in the governing party. Such work would challenge many party members to help with developing a kind of mobilization in their area for the people.

To the extent that we put the programme into practice, we would be researching again in order to change the programme. The programme cannot be something static—this is a naive perception of the problem. One cannot regard a programme abstractly and metaphysically—it was to be created as a result of reality and has to be changed, dependent on the reality. So, all the time the programme is in movement, it is something which is dynamic.

Let us suppose that it proves possible to carry out this project, and that you get some good results. The first result is that

by doing it, you learn to do it better, because by putting this methodology into practice, you are creating methodology. The main point is to discover methods with which to work whereby the people are not objects. This is self reliance.

Secondly, if it is possible in one area, then may be you would go on to analyse other areas, so that at one stage, in three or four years' time, the Institute of Adult Education of Dar-es-Salaam University would have a kind of map showing the levels of perception of people of reality. Not. of course, a rigid map because, by the fact that the Institute would be increasing the action, these levels must necessarily change. For example, this would effect the first person elected to be the reporter of that meeting, because he or she had a different praxis before.

In the last analysis, while you would be helping other institutions to work with the people, you would be trained to train educators. One thing is to clarify some aspects of adult education and some objectives of educational research. The other thing is to organize seminars for future educators based on this. This enables you to say to the students: 'Now we will begin to discuss the experience acquired during research in area A in Dar-es-Salaam. We would like to discuss with you how people in this research reveal their perception.' You can then begin analysis, clarifying point by point, the ideological and political choices.

3

The Militant Observer: A Sociological Alternative

Rosisca Darcy de Oliveira
*and Miguel Darcy de Oliveira**

Scientific Research and Political Power

The purpose of this chapter is to present systematically the methodology of the militant observer. This is the methodology which serves us as a tool in our action/research in the work of the Institute of Cultural Action (IDAC). Before getting to the core of the subject, however, it would be well to clarify exactly what we mean when we use the word 'research.'

For many people, the word 'research' is associated with voluminous and abstract scientific work which is presented, frequently in esoteric language, by specialists who deal with narrow subjects. These long-term research projects are usually carried on under the aegis of a university, where they often represent nothing more than the fulfilment of academic rules and conditions for obtaining honours and degrees. In spite of all the knowledge which these works supposedly represent, it is not infrequent, that having been solemnly presented, they go quietly to rest on the shelves of university libraries.

Of late, however, aside from this useless research, we find another type of research taking place and having a much more precise and utilitarian goal. Numerous different institutions and foundations from governmental agencies to multinational corporations are setting up sophisticated research projects in order

*This is an abridged version of Document No. 9 published by IDAC (The Institute of Cultural Action) in Geneva in the spring of 1975.

to better understand the so-called 'unfortunate' or 'under-privileged' social groups.

In the Third World, we find experts of development programmes busy at work studying the Indians, the peasants, tribal populations, or slum-dwellers. In North America, specialists from all branches of the social sciences analyze the behaviour patterns of ethnic minorities. In Western Europe, it seems that the favourite subjects for study are the migrant workers, the rebellious youth, or the regional movements striving for cultural and political autonomy.

The themes vary, but the same patterns are repeated almost everywhere. The oppressed are identified, measured, dissected and programmed *from the outside* by the oppressor or the oppressor's representatives.

The oppressors, with the help of their sciences, determine the goals of the research and the methodology to be followed. The results, moreover, are practically never communicated, or even discussed, with the persons who are most directly concerned, that is to say, with the oppressed. The research is always done *on them*, and that means *without them.*

The 'observed' groups are simple objects of study. They continue unaware of how their responses to questionnaires can be used to know them better and to control them better. As Gonzalez Casanova, a Latin American sociologist, has said, the problems studied are not the problems of the oppressed; *it is rather the oppressed themselves who are studied as the problem.*[1] The programmes, for example, which were set up in Latin America to study 'non-conformity,' financed by North American universities and foundations, had as their goal the establishment of control mechanisms over the 'non-conformists.' In the same way, research concerned with fertility opens the way to programmes of birth control.[2]

At IDAC, however, we have neither professional researchers nor any specialists who attach themselves to certain subjects as though they were in their own private game reserve. We try in our published texts to reflect our daily involvement in action and reflection.

From where, then, stems our need to do research? And how does our research relate to our work as a whole? The answer to these questions grows out of our concrete experience. It is,

precisely our involvement in different processes of social change which demands that research be done. That is to say, we discover, as a result of our involvement, a need for a systematic understanding of a given reality on which we act and by which we are conditioned. The goal is a clearer orientation, a continual redefinition, and an enrichment of our involvement in change.

It is clear that such research, directly related to daily concerns and experiences, must be of a different nature from the traditional social science in both content and form. We reject the approach, supposedly neutral and objective, of studying the oppressed from the outside so as to manipulate them more effectively. We try, in so for as is possible, to put into practice the double proposition of Stavenhagen. He sees two possible lines for meaningful research. Either one must work with an oppressed group to build *from the inside of the group* an understanding which will contribute to overcoming the oppressive situation; or one must work at the other pole of the relationship of domination by studying the ruling groups and the mechanisms by which they ensure their continuing power.[3]

In the former category—of research done on the basis of direct involvement—we are aided by the methodology of the militant observer.

We propose to explain this methodology, to examine the conditions for its application and the scientific foundation on which it rests, and to look at its concepts of society, social science, and the role of the researcher.

In order to examine this methodology, we must begin a reflection which will seem, at times, very theoretical and very abstract. But this requires an effort which must not and cannot be avoided. In order that the social sciences cease to be the monopoly of the so-called experts and specialists, oppressed groups must learn to appropriate for themselves the 'scientific knowledge' and use it as a tool in the process of struggle against manipulation and oppression.

Which social science, which society?

At their beginnings, the social sciences dreamed of studying society in the same way that the natural sciences studied nature. To understand social events, to be able to predict them, to be

able to describe them and their functioning, and to be capable of reducing them to formulas that would explain them: these were the goals. All human actions, the behaviour patterns of social groups, the nature of religious movements, all historic events should be studied, or so it was thought, systematically, carefully, and with objectivity. By objectivity was meant the ability of science to examine society and all its phenomena as though they were *things*. The golden rule of this sociology was the strict separation between the value system of the scientist and the so-called 'facts.'

It was thought that one should be able to examine human actions with the same detachment and the same cool-headedness with which the biologist examines a microbe under the microscope. Between the scientist who did the examining and the society which was to be examined there was nothing but 'scientific instruments.' Just as a laboratory technician is isolated from the object of study so as to avoid contamination, the social scientist was to proceed in a clinical relationship to the human behaviour which he or she planned to observe.

As for the purpose of this science, the social scientists pretended that their understanding of society's objective reality had a value in and of itself and that their science was uninvolved and without commitment. According to them, their findings did not necessarily have a normative influence on social reality. Science had only to predict and elaborate usable results.

Society was there, real and solid, waiting and offering itself as a chellange to the scientist's understanding. Social scientists saw themselves as outside and apart from the objects which they wanted to explain.

Freed, then, from all subjectivity and released from sympathies or antipathies, the social scientist would describe society as it was, reducing it to that which could be comprehended with tools of quantitative measurement.

The science that presented itself as neutral and non-political or non-partisan became, over the years, a simple technique for assuring a better functioning of the established society. This included science's participation in the setting up of a whole network of institutions of social control. How did neutral science come to that? How could a science which understood itself as detached from any value system become a powerful

means of conserving and reinforcing the established order?

The answer is clear : its premises were false from the beginning (social reality is not an unchanging situation and the scientist cannot be merely an impartial observer), and its definition of social reality as a thing that can be examined with instruments of quantitative measurement was a definition that is necessarily limiting and manipulative.[1]

The positivist ideal, according to which all could be predicted and controlled by science, omitted from its scheme some elementary and necessary steps. It raised no questions about the causes of the social phenomena and it made no effort to place each slice of social reality into a totality, into a larger social vision. A science which limits itself to the prediction and elaboration of usable results leads to manipulating people for the preservation of the existing order. Without value judgements, without grasping social reality as something much more complex and moving than a simple object, no radical questioning of society can take place.

When confronted with the positivist dream of an exact and objective social science, one can raise some simple and very basic questions: Where, for example, do our ideas come from? Must we not see social science itself as a social phenomenon that has to be historically situated? Must we not even study the role and actions of the social scientist as a factor in the conservation or change of society?

Actually, the myth of objectivity will not stand up to a very rigorous examination. First of all, social events are not just *things*. They are the stuff of human actions. Secondly, the social scientists cannot be just detached observers. They are persons who come from a given segment of society with a history and an experience that condition their worldview, which determine their scientific interests as well as the content and purpose of their research.

How can we speak, then, of a separation between the subject (the social scientist), and the object of research (society), if the subject is, in fact, a social being, if human actions shape and transform society, if sociologists are conditioned by the social project they propose or by the transformations which they set in motion? How can a social scientist be objective toward society if he or she is an integral part of that same society and

if the social position which he or she occupies, causes him or her to think in such and such a manner?

It is obviously useless to strive to treat social events as if they were phenomena that could be predicted, caused, or controlled in a laboratory. Social events tend to rebel against being programmed. They can react since they are created by human beings—if one tries to domesticate them. Above all, they can defy forecasts by spontaneously and autonomously creating new realities, and these new realities are capable of influencing the scientists themselves. Existing as a result of what society is, and participating every day in its construction, the social scientists can only separate themselves from society in the abstract constructions of the positivists. Ivory towers do not exist within reality.

A criticism of positivism cannot stop with unmasking the role of the researcher. It must also deal with the idea positivists hold of the society they pretend to study from the outside. Those of the positivistic persuasion content themselves with cutting off a thin slice of social reality, examining it minutely and then proclaiming their findings to be or represent reality.

Actually, far from being a given and frozen thing there in front of us, society is an historic process moving around us with nothing static about it. It unfolds around us, but also with us. Nor is society the sum total of all the different sections which we can cut off and isolate so as to study them. It is much richer and more complex. It is a totality of factors which constantly interact and interplay. One does not understand one's neighbourhood without considering the city or town in which it is located, just as one does not fathom what is happening today without reference to what existed in the time of our parents. Nor can we foresee what will unfold tomorrow without trying, by way of an analytical procedure, to construct a global theory which explains historic facts and events.

Social reality, then, is never static, fixed, or dead, never an object to be observed and manipulated. It is alive and its life and movement are the result of tension and conflict. Far from being a given fact, a finished product which will remain unchanged so that we can examine it, reality is the precarious result, always in question, of the confrontation between oppressor and oppressed. This confrontation can take the most diverse

forms, depending on the forces which are in play: oppression of one class by another class, of one race by another race, of one sex by another sex, or of one country or one culture by others.

The specific forces which are in play in each given situation can change and influence this confrontation between the oppressor and the oppressed. But the confrontation will continue as long as there exist exploiters and exploited. That is precisely what ensures the continually changing and moving character of reality: contradictory, fluid, and open to overcoming the situation.

The positivists and the pragmatists never question, in any profound manner, the reality on which they operate. They only try to improve and arrange the established order, never asking whether the structures in place are structures which oppress or liberate men and women. As a result of their attachment to the *status quo* whether they believe it or not—they reduce their 'science' to a simple technique for maintaining and perfecting what already exists.

We feel that we must begin with a premise which is radically different—and radically opposed. For us, what is here today is in no way an objective truth which must be respected and guarded at any price. No social situation is unalterable. *Today's reality is not the only possible reality.* In other words, what exists, often, *can* be changed. One must constantly question social reality, assume the right and the duty to make value judgements, and refuse everything in our society which negates the creative liberty and autonomy of the human being. The very concept of objectivity must be re-examined. Confronted with a reality which is full of contradiction and conflict, objectivity can no longer be a synonym for detachment and impartiality.

As against the examination of what *is*, we propose research on what *can be*. Rather than attachment to the status quo and the established order, we suggest research on alternatives to an oppressive reality. In short, rather than using science as a simple technique for making society function better, we want to show its usefulness as a tool for unmasking and criticising any situation which negates the human being.[5]

Within this critical perspective, the researcher cannot take refuge in the role of a social science 'expert' or a specialist of wisdom. The social scientist will be a militant, involved in the

process of social change to which he or she can bring specific and necessary instruments: thought, understanding and scientific tools.

In the light of everything that we have said here, we can now move ahead to analyse in detail some of the central ideas of the militant observer methodology. This methodology, worked out and clarified some years ago in Latin America,[6] proposes the development of a synthesis between *study* of the social change process and *involvement* in that process. Being, then, at the same time, both observer and militant, the researcher will have as a goal the furthering of the struggle of the social group with whom his project is to be carried out. Rather than worrying about explaining events after they have already taken place, the militant observer will try, through action and research, to bring about an understanding of the process of change by the group which is experiencing that process, thus enabling the group to re-define and to deepen the scope of its action.

The militant observer

Militant observation is a method of research which addresses itself primarily to the oppressed and it can only be developed with them, for its purpose is to stimulate the autonomous organization and creativity of the group. We shall not claim that this is the only possible use which one can make of the social sciences within a perspective of liberation. As has already been said above, we share Stavenhagen's opinion that another priority area for sociological research is the study of those who hold power and of the system of domination. Militant observation is not the only 'correct' way of approaching the social sciences. It is a particularly adequate method for those who, stirred by a political intent, want to contribute to change.

The process of militant observation is made up of four fundamental steps: approaching the group and establishing a relationship with it; the period of observation and collecting of information; the organizing of the collected information; and, finally, returning the material to the group for discussion and elaboration. Before looking more in depth at each of these four steps, we should examine for a moment those with whom one works within the perspectives of militant observation. Or, to use the traditionalsociological language, how does one 'choose the

object of study' in militant observation.

Three factors should be considered here. First of all, the researchers should examine closely the social reality around them, trying to grasp the conflicts and tensions which are present and trying to identify the social groups which have within them the hope and the need for change. Certainly the researchers' work will progress more rapidly in a group which is already aware of its oppression and has a certain experience of collective action. Conversely, the task is more difficult with a group which has not yet passed the first elementary stage of perception of an oppressive situation, often expressed by feelings of uneasiness or powerlessness. A last important factor is the degree of solidarity which the researcher feels for the problems experienced by the group.

The closer the researcher is able to feel to the group's everyday experience, the easier will be the process of insertion into the group, the collection of information, the identification of the central problems and issues, and the necessary dialogue with the community. From our own experiences, we can say at this point that it was, for example, much easier for university women to take up a programme with non-university women in an urban-industrial setting than it was for a young American to integrate himself into an Aymara Indian community on the Peruvian *altiplano*.

For all questions concerning militant observation, however, there are no easy or ready-made answers or rules to follow concerning the choice of a group. What counts most is, on the one hand, the political intent of the researcher and, on the other hand, his or her capacity to analyse—with the aid of the scientific tools at hand—the social reality, the level of perception, and the action of the group with which the work is to be done.

The step of insertion into the group

The first step of militant observation is the process by which the researcher approaches the selected social group. This process, often long and difficult, is the necessary condition for research that is done from inside the group and with the participation of the community's members. But there must be no illusions at this point either. It is very important that the researcher not be experienced as a 'foreign body' or an intrusion

by those with whom the work is to be carried on. Such a situation would cause reticence and distrust.

The researcher must learn to establish a relationship with the group such that a progressive acceptance takes place. However, the researcher must be accepted as he or she really is, that is to say, as someone who comes from the outside, who wishes to do an important and useful study, but who, it must be understood, will eventually go away again. It would be useless—and even wrong—for the researcher to desire to totally disappear or be fusioned into the community. Attempting to hide goals or refusing to assume openly one's specific roles are attitudes which reveal, in the final analysis, a lack of trust toward the group. This also suggests manipulation that reproduces the traditional patterns of the researcher who comes to examine an object and decides all alone what information will be given to or withheld from the group.

To avoid such ambiguity, researchers must accept the fact that their presence is, of itself, a transforming factor in the life of the group, and this fact should be incorporated into the work. By this we mean that the way in which the community moves in contact with the intervention from the outside must be considered and understood by all.

We have already mentioned an example of research with women. In that experience, the women being interviewed felt at first a kind of block toward the university women who were engaged in the research project. This fact was analyzed through dialogue between the researchers and the non-university women of the group being interviewed. Through such a dialogue the block was largely overcome.

If researchers, rather than assuming their role and honestly discussing it with the community, try to become full members of the group, the result will be a self-negation, a loss of their reason for being there, and a rejection of the specific task which they came to perform. And if they permit themselves to be engulfed in daily routine, or if they get lost in activism, blindly following the group's patterns of action, the researchers will be unable to use their science in a critical way, becoming only a militant. If, on the other hand, their goal is to question and to clarify the group's practice, they must continue to keep a certain critical distance from the reality and from the group actions.

True insertion into the group implies a permanent tension between the risk of total indentification with the group and the need for keeping a distance which permits a critical stance. In other words, a synthesis must be reached between the militant and the scientist.

The step of collecting information

Collecting information allows the researcher to acquire a fuller vision of the community, its internal organization, and its relations to the totality of society. It also permits the researcher to grasp the perception which the group has of its own situation. Two separate steps make up this process: the construction of tentative hypotheses on the basis of observation; and study and the verification of those hypotheses through interviews with the community's members.

Before directly entering into contract with the community, the researchers should, by going over all available information about the group and the place in which they will be involved, draw up a provisional profile of the situation which they will encounter. The paths which can be followed for accomplishing this are extremely diverse and can include the study of official documents, the observation of everyday life, the identification of the community's institutions and power structures, forms of economic and cultural activity, the group's religious expressions, etc.

It is also important to know how to identify, within the group, key persons who are known and respected by the community. These persons can be very helpful in giving a better understanding of the reality to be observed and studied and they can make the first contacts with the population much easier.

Based on general information that can be accumulated in the preparatory work, researchers can set up their tentative hypotheses of the community situation. These first hypotheses, then, can be confirmed, corrected, or enriched during the interviews with the people.

Raised here is the important question of choosing adequate techniques for moving on to the interviews. It seems quite clear to us that the traditional question and answer approach must be immediately discarded. To begin with, the very form of such

questionnaires, worked out beforehand by researchers, makes the appearance of new, unexpected information unlikely. One gets caught in a closed framework, previously defined, and the answers to questions can then only confirm or reject what the researcher already has in mind. The door is closed to the elaboration of new ideas. Also, the use of a rigid questionnaire—whether written or just in the mind of the researcher—can cause blocks and inhibitions on the part of the person being interviewed, can reinforce the power of the researcher who controls the entire process, and can trap the whole process in the traditional scheme of vertical relationships between researcher and group to be studied.

Much more rich and adequate for our purposes is the technique of the 'open interview' seen as a free dialogue in which people discuss what interests them. It permits the uncovering from what is said of new and unsuspected hypotheses. Of course this sort of open interview has a basic structure, the result of hypotheses which the researcher has already formulated. The structure, however, must only indicate general lines to be followed concerning aspects of the group's reality which the researcher hopes to uncover or understand better. The interview should not have a rigidly prefabricated framework from which the researcher fears to depart.

The open interview's flexibility aims simply to make possible a more authentic expression by those interviewed, permitting the collection of richer, more interesting material which is closer to the group's experience and reality. This often implies a redefinition of original hypotheses. Problems and new aspects which were not grasped by the researcher can thus be identified and incorporated into the research process. Better interaction between the researcher and the group is also fostered by the open interview.

These reflections on technique must not make us forget a fundamental point about the goal of collecting information. What must be of interest to the researcher in this step *is to know what people think*, to understand how they see their situation, what major problems they come up against in their daily life, and that they struggle for. That is to say, our goal is to discover the level of perception and consciousness of the people involved.

This point must be emphasized, for often, overcome by impatience, one is tempted to skip steps which are absolutely necessary and begin a discussion with those being interviewed. Such discussions can change ideas or lead to a different understanding of the situation in which they live. A number of things can bring about this temptation to be hurried through the process. The process of militant observation must have as its starting point the population's level of consciousness, not the researcher's level of consciousness. This demands, from the very beginning, a correct evaluation of the actual level of awareness. Also, we must remember that simply hoping to convince people to think differently is an extremely naive attitude since a changed level of consciousness can come only in relationship to the group's action regarding questions they themselves have defined. To bring about this change is the purpose of the research project. Any researcher who attempts from the very beginning to give the group *his or her* point of view concerning *its* reality adopts, yet again, that manipulative attitude which can only give rise to negative reactions and block the whole process.

The Systematic organization of the information

On the basis of the material received the researcher can begin the difficult and delicate step of interpreting, systematizing and organizing the information, looking toward offering it to the reflection of the group during the fourth step in the research process.

The analysis of the basic material must inform us on two different levels: the real situation of the group; and their perception of that situation. It is, precisely, the realization of a gap between everyday reality and the manner of perceiving that reality which will define the target area in the process of political education. What constitutes this gap and how does one identify and understand it?

Very often at the beginning of a research project with an oppressed group—whether with women, young people, workers or ethnic minorities, to cite examples from our own experience —we notice that the people express a vague sentiment of uneasiness and discontent toward their situations. In such a way they give evidence of an elementary perception, neither conscious nor developed, of 'things don't work right any more.'[7]

However, not understanding well the causes of this state of affairs and, above all, not knowing what to do to change the situation, they are led from uneasiness and discontent to a feeling of powerlessness which can block or can smother the desire for change.

To protect themselves from the heavy anxiety of having to tolerate an intolerable situation, people use the defense mechanism of 'forgetting' their reality, of explicitly ignoring the existence of an oppressive situation.

Everyday reality is too difficult to look in the face. Possibilities of real change seem too far away, and previous experience was often deceptive and painful. So the hope for change is renounced and exchanged for refuge in an attitude of passivity and resignation in which one can feel more secure. From the moment in which hope for changing oppression by community action is lost, only individual salvation is left.

Solidarity with others who suffer the same oppression is then exchanged for identification with a model and image furnished by the oppressor. Friends are mistrusted and aggressed. The oppressor is imitated at any price. The individualistic position of 'everyone for himself' excludes all possible community action, because the objective is then no longer to change oppressive reality. The objective is then for each individual to rise above the inferior others. This is done by brickery and cleverness toward other members of the same community and by submission and imitation of the model that is given (the boss, the ruling class, the whites, the male, the 'developed,' etc.).[8]

This characteristic movement from uneasiness to powerlessness, from powerlessness to rejection of the existence of a too painful reality, and from that rejection to imitating the oppressor's behaviour is clearly stimulated and aided by all sorts of social control mechanisms and institutions.

From the school to the mass media, the values, the behaviour patterns, and the life-style of those who hold power are given as the only acceptable models. Only on a specifically individual level can adaptation and integration bring change.

Thanks, then, to the ever-present process of ideological manipulation, the oppressed learn to accept and internalize the oppressor's values, mimicking the oppressor's behaviour. This fact is the root of many of the contradictions which come to

the surface during the interviews. An example in our experience was a woman who professed to be completely happy with her house-wife role. A few minutes later, during the same interview with the researcher she contradicted, without realizing it, her proclaimed self-satisfaction by speaking of her sister whose life was the very opposite of her own. She said of her sister, 'She's the happiest woman I know.'

An even more striking example is found in an experiment which took place among Blacks and Puerto Ricans in New York's Harlem ghetto.[9] In the framework of a cultural action programme in the community, a series of photographs were made and shown to a group of about thirty ghetto residents. The first photo showed a view of New York City in which one saw in the foreground the characteristic decaying buildings of the ghetto. Beyond them, and above them in the picture, could be seen better buildings where the middle class resides, and further still, almost lost in the haze, were to be seen the outlines of sky-scrapers, office buildings of large corporations where, it would seem, no one lives. Having shown this photo to the group, the researchers asked them to identify the area where they lived. In response, most of the participants chose the middle-class housing while a few even pointed to the sky-scrapers in the distance. Not one person indicated the slums.

Following this, the researchers offered a second picture for the group to look at. The second picture showed a ghetto street. The question then asked was, 'where might this street be found?' One answer was that the street must be in Africa. The researchers continued by arguing that, after all, one could see in the picture some signs in Spanish and English and that the cars in the street seemed to be American.

The group responded to each argument by suggesting, for example, that the presence of the American cars could be explained by Americans who travel to Africa for their vacations and that the signs were probably just to help vacationing Americans find their way more easily.

As the researchers continued to ask questions, the anxiety and irritation of the group rose palpably. And that continued until, finally, one of the participants recognized the street in question as the street on which he lived and the one on which the meeting was being held. And then he added that the

garbage visible on the street was a reflection of their own internal rottenness.

When the experienced reality becomes too violent and distructive, one must refuse, at all costs, to recognize it. And then when one gets to the point of recognizing it, there is often expressed an attitude of self-depreciation or aggression toward the rest of the group (the garbage which reflected their own inside rotting). The perspective is individualistic and moralistic. The self-degradation replaces all attempt at analysing the causes of poverty. If one lives in a ghetto, so the thinking goes, it's because one is a failure, it's because of personal inability. At the same time, such a reality is painful, and to escape it, one is ready to mimic the oppressor, to identify oneself with those who live in the better housing of the photographs or those who spend their vacations in Africa.

This Harlem experience points out, In the clearest of ways, the gap existing between the group's reality and the perception which the group has of that same reality.[10] But that is not sufficient. The work of research cannot stop with the recognition of what exists. The collected information must be organized and systematized so that it can be given back to the group and so that the group can then work through it and go beyond it.

Here again, we put a distance between ourselves and the schemes of traditional research. Traditionally, it was almost always the researchers themselves, or the institutions that asked for their work, which determined what would be done with the results. At the same time, the researcher felt compelled to arrive at conclusions, and these conclusions became the terminal point of the work, or they sometimes became the basis of action which was exercised on the group from the outside.

In the process of militant observation, however, the organization of the collected material is not seen as producing a definitive portrait of the group. Understanding the existing situation is not seen as the end product of the research which was carried on, for what *is* already contains what *can be*. The information, then will be organized so as to give the group working material with which and through which, by *a process of political education*, the gap between reality and perception of reality can be closed.

Giving the material back to the group

The work done during the step of interpreting the material brings us to the starting point of any political education process, that is to say, the people's level of awareness. It also permits us to construct the raw material—the content—of the process which will be an analysis of fundamental problems in the life of the group. Taking into account the group's actual level of awareness, it is then a question of offering for their critical analysis the material collected in the preceeding steps.

The group must be confronted with their own reality and must be stimulated to treat it lucidly and critically. This means learning to go beyond the escape mechanisms, defense mechanisms, and rejections which we mentioned above.

One possibility—among others—for accomplishing this organization of material and returning it to the group is the use of visual or graphic expressions of significant points, for example, slides, photos, films, etc. The group can then be asked to analyse these presentations.

This means taking a segment of their daily experience and turning it into an object that can be given back to the group for critical discussion. Such a procedure permits the group to find a 'critical distance' from their experience and to escape from being submerged in the daily oppressive routine so as to look at their reality in a new and fresh way.

The isolated segment of reality becomes the object of discussion, permitting the group to step back from their everyday life, look at it, and reflect critically on it. The group becomes, at one and the same time, both subject and object of the process. They analyse themselves, question their own reality, discover reasons for the situation in which they find themselves.

Clearly, the researcher's task is not finished when the material is organized and proposed to the group for their study. The researcher must be present in the meetings where the people confront the material. The job is then to orient the group's examination of the material and to invite them to go further and further in their analysis.

The group, left to itself and still marked by the society's dominant values, could limit itself to recognizing what *is*. It becomes the researcher's task, at this point, to push the group

progressively to question their situation, to identify the basic problems, to consider possible realistic actions that can be taken to improve their situation. In short, the task consists of trying to put into movement *a permanent process of action and reflection* that will give the group a continually clarified understanding of their situation, developing their power for self-organization and for creative intervention in their own lives.

The researcher will not bring to them from the outside *the one* lucid and critical understanding. Rather in offering to the group, systematically and in organized form, a critical look at the material collected among them, the researcher can stimulate the group's own awareness of the reality in which they live.

This is not a question of being able to bring consciousness from the outside, but of creating the proper context so that the group's consciousness can emerge from within. Always seeking to move beyond simple recognition of what *is*, the fundamental movement of militant observation consists in seizing the potential for change from the inside of each given situation and activating that potential towards what *can be*. Each new action gives matter for reflection, and each theoretical formulation is a provisional proposition to be tested and redefined by further practice and experience.

It is impossible to pre-define a termination point for this process of the group's self-reflection and self-organization. But we must prepare for the moment when the presence of the researcher—who came from the outside—is no longer necessary. We are even tempted to say that the best proof of the researcher's success is seen when the group takes charge of the process which had been set in motion by the researcher. The group's control of the process, which makes the researcher's continued presence unnecessary, means that they have succeeded in appropriating to themselves the knowledge and the science which the researcher brought. This appropriation of knowledge is the fruit of a long process during which the group became familiar with tools and techniques worked out during the research project and was able to verify their usefulness. Acquisition by the group of methodological tools which were once the monopoly of the researcher, prevents the repetition of a dependence relationship vis-a-vis those who 'have knowledge' and allows the group to develop, autonomously, its movement of action and reflection.

Before concluding, it seems well to raise the question of evaluation, or of scientific criteria, for the methodology which we have just presented. How can the militant observer's success be judged, or what is the degree of truth in the theoretical basis of militant observation? Our only answer to such questions is to say, quite frankly and simply, that the process succeeded when it helped the group understand its own reality and fostered the group's self-determination, when it stimulated conscious, creative action for social change.

Considering, once more, the words of Stavenhagen, we can say, in conclusion, that the degree of a theory's truth is in direct relationship to *its capacity for providing answers to concrete problems of everyday life*. Its usefulness as a tool at the service of organized social groups validates a theory of society or a theory of social change. And if that theory is verified through praxis—by the organized autonomous action of social groups—it ceases, at that moment, to be a 'simple' theory. It becomes, in and of itself, a social reality.

Therefore. . . . .

Within the realm of the human sciences, a separation is often made between a number of disciplines. So it is that one speaks of pedagogy, of sociology, or of psychology, etc. We understand what each of these disciplines has to offer, and we do not deny their specific roles. But we have the impression of being at a crossroads between sociology (understood as militant observation), and pedagogy (understood as cultural section). IDAC's research is at the intersection of these two disciplines.

Looking critically at what is, we try to go beyond the logic of facts to grasp what is not yet but what is already present on the horizon of the possible. To recognise the possible within the existing reality, to make it visible and bring it to life, that is basic proposition of any militant sociology/pedagogy.

Notes

[1]Pablo, Gonzalez Casanova, "La Nouvelle, Sociologie en Ameriene Latine," *Anthropos*, Paris, December 1967, p. 39.

[2]One of the best examples of the use of sociological research for clearly repressive ends is the Camelot Project in Latin America. See on this Horowitz, *The Rise and Fall of the Camelot Project: An Essay on the Relationships Between Social Science and Social Policy*, 1967.

[3]R. Stavenhagen, "Comment Decoloniser les Sciences Sociales," published in a collection of his unedited texts by *Anthropos*, Paris, 1972.

[4]Since there are so many texts which develop a criticism of positivism, we shall cite here only the work of C. Wright Mills, *The Power elite*.

[5]The roots of this debate which we mention here are already found in Marx's theses on *Deuerbach*. Among the texts of the Frankfurt School which present the foundations of the critical theory of society, we shall mention two essays directly linked to the problem treated here. One is *Theorie traditionnelle et Theorie critique*, by Horkheimer, Paris, 1974. The other is the preface by Marcuse to his work *Reason and Revolution*.

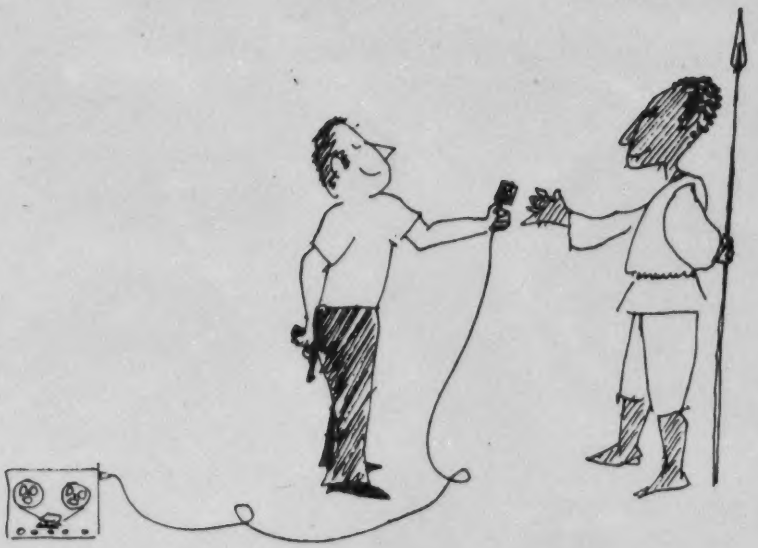
[6]For a consideration of the origin and foundation of militant observation in Latin America, see the article already mentioned by Stavenhagen or the collective work published by the Colombian Centre of La Rosca, directed by Fals Borda and A. Liberos, *Causa Popular, Ciencia Popular*, Bogota, 1972.

[7]Mao Tse Tung, in his essay, "On Practice" defines this elementary stage in the cognitive process in which people "see only the obvious sides of things of phenomena, their isolated and external aspects."

[8]This mechanism has been the object of a number of recent studies which are well known. We may mention *Protrait of the Coloniser* by Meni; *The Wretched of the Earth* by Fanon; and *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Freire.

[9]Concerning this group "Full Circle" which, under, the direction of Robert Fox carried on this experience, see Mary Cole's *Summer in the City*, New York, 1968.

[10]This gap between reality and the perception which one has of reality brings us to examine the delicate problem of "false consciousness" which has been studied for a long time by such authors as Lukacs, Gramsci, Goldmann, and Sartre.



4

Persons, Not Respondents: Alternative Approach in the Study of Social Processes

*Michael Pilsworth and Ralph Ruddock**

Education is a social process, unlike digestion, say, which is a natural process. Education—the taking in and assimilating (and perhaps regurgitating)—requires different methods of study than the natural process of digestion. The crucial distinction is that social proceses are the product of human intention and consciousness, whereas natural processes are part of the given world, existing independently of our social world. This is such an obvious distinction that it is surprising to note that research in education is still based largely on a research approach which Parlett has so aptly and correctly described as the "agricultural-botany model."[1]

An increasing number of sociologists have come to question the reliance of researchers on quantitative methods of social enquiry.[2] But these methods are still dominant in education, social welfare and government. Investigators in these fields commonly suppose that to adopt an orthodox research is to be somehow "Scientific" and, therefore, virtuous. Increasingly elaborate techniques have been devised, often based on sophisticated statistical procedures, with the overall effect of widening the gap between the researcher and his subject of study.[3] We now possess a wealth of facts and figures about specific aspects of the educational process; yet we seem to be understanding less and less about human behaviour.

*This chapter has been adapted from an article that appeared in *Convergence* 1975, No. 2.

Orthodox scientific methods

In orthodox research methods, there is a preponderant concern with reliability, or consistency, of results. This is based on an assumption that what can be shown to occur repeatedly or can be replicated must, therefore, be 'valid.' This allegedly scientific approach to research is reinforced by the researcher's need to adhere to established coventions of his discipline in order to be professionally respectable and to gain thereby the tangible rewards of such respect : university positions, research grants, invitations to meetings, etc. Moreover, in order to maintain their identities, disciplines develop their own languages and styles of expression, legitimise certain sources of knowledge and devalue others. If the researcher wishes to further his career, or obtain a grant from a funding body, he is often forced to adopt a perspective which does not contravene the rules of his academic community. Thus he falls back on established methods such as random sampling, inferential statistics, interviews and questionnaire surveys. What are the limitations of these research tools?

Limitations of sampling method

Statistical sampling is designed to provide accurate evidence about distributions of individuals within certain categories.[4] The basic aim is to ensure that a small number of people (the sample) be representative, in certain stated respects, of a much larger number of people (the "population"); statistical procedures permit the researcher to estimate the likelihood of a particular sample being representative of the "population." If the sample is representative of the "population" then, it is argued, one can generalise from the sample to the "population." A "good" statistical sample is tested within its own methodology; that is, the criteria of adequacy are purely quantitative and are built into the sampling method. It is often difficult for someone other than a specialist in methodology to comprehend fully the procedures involved. As the techniques become more and more sophisticated, ever larger numbers of researchers tend to accept their virtues uncritically; faith, rather than through understanding.

Pseudo-objective interview method

The majority of research in education is based on data collected from interviews or through the use of questionnaires. Both of these methods are "symptoms" of the scientific approach to the study of society and as such are instrumental in perpetuating the myth of objectivity in empirical research:

> "Interviews and questionnaires intrude as a foreign element into the social setting they would describe, they create as well as measure attitudes, they elicit atypical roles and responses, they are limited to those who are accessible and will cooperate, and the responses obtained are produced in part by dimensions of individual differences irrelevant to the topic at hand."[5]

In examining the situation in which a researcher and his respondent interact, whether directly in a face-to-face encounter, as in the interview situation, or indirectly, as in some types of questionnaire surveys, certain general features emerge. There is usually, on the part of the respondent, an awareness that he is the object of study. There is also the awareness that the situation is a special sort of interaction which requires a series of responses which are not part of the range of responses used in everyday interaction. The respondent selects a role which best fits his definition of the context based on his perceptions of the researcher, of the subject matter and of the changing dynamics of the situation (what have been called "demand characteristics").[6]

There is the phenomenon of "response set" first elaborated by Cronbach,[7] a tendency to endorse a statement rather than disagree with it. The researcher also selects a particular role which is supposed to embody most of the characteristics of the orthodox research approach: objectivity, distance from the respondent, formality, etc. In practice, however, this formal role is often abandoned:

> "The interview is a relatively new kind of encounter in the history of human relations, and the older models of encounter...carry role definitions much better articulated and exigent. The interviewer will be constantly tempted, if the other party falls back on one of these older models, to reciprocate—tempted and excused."[8]

Thus the game has to be abandoned if the respondent doesn't know the rules, or if he refuses to play.

> As Benney and Hughes rightly point out, the interview is *:* "more than a tool and object of study. It is the art of sociological sociability, the game which we play for the pleasure of savouring its subtleties. It is our flirtation with life, our eternal affair, to play hard and to win, but played with that detachment and amusement which give us, win or lose, the spirit to rise up and interview again and again."[9]

The interview situation must be an exchange between equals, with both parties supposedly turning a blind eye to the race, social class, intelligence, confidence and physique of each other. "As with all contractual relations, the fiction or convention of equality must govern the situation."[10] The interview is designed to minimise the human aspects of the encounter, and to emphasise "only those aspects that can be kept general enough and demonstrable enough to be counted. As an encounter between these two particular people, the typical interview has no meaning."[11]

That the interview is designed to be artificial is an apt pointer to its limits in educational research. Moreover, the interview is not only artificial; it is, like most other artifacts, culture-specific. Interviewing is a western phenomenon, as rooted in western society as are the mass media, which have, incidentally, shaped the conventions of the interview situation perhaps more than any other single agency. This fact is extremely important in relation to the choice of research methods which are applicable to developing countries.

Defects in questionnaire method

The questionnaire has been criticised repeatedly for its technical imperfections and there is a large literature summarising the major sources of possible error.[12] However, to be concerned only with technical imperfections is to ignore the wider issues posed by the use of questionnaires. Cicourel has exposed a whole range of defects in the questionnaire method.[13] He points out, for example, to the impropriety—when one is interpreting answers—of adding one 'yes' to another in a way that assumes their equivalence. All experience tells us that two

affirmative answers are quite unlikely to be identical in weight or even in meaning.

It is notable that much of Cicourel's contribution to our understanding of communication between people was based, not on a representative sample and the statistical processing of data, but on extensive work with two profoundly deaf children. From this direct approach, fascinating questions have arisen about the degree of correspondence between spoken language and sign language for the deaf; wheather children growing without verbal facility are capable of abstraction, conceptualisation etc. We may also take Cicourel's point that theory may blind us to fact. We may become so concerned with data that relates to our hypotheses that we fail to see the phenomena as they are, fail to allow the human world to speak directly to us.

An opposite example of this neglect is the fact that we hear very little about the condition of the question-answerer. It is assumed that his responses are rational and that the process of question—solving does not involve the more typically human aspects of his personality: warmth, depth of feeling, emotions etc. Implicit in the use of the questionnaire is thus an acceptance that one is not concerned with subjective responses or affective perceptions. Take, for example, this question from a personality questionnaire:[14]

"Would you rather be at home on your own than go to a boring party?"

The question, which requires a "yes" or "no" answer, is at such a superficial level that it scarcely merits a response. It is very unlikely that a simple affirmative or negative response represents any approximation of the response which such a choice would elicit in reality.

The weakness of the questionnaire method is that the investigator imposes his own understanding, his own definition of the system he investigates, upon his respondent. He runs a serious risk that the responses he gets will confirm his own predetermined view. Close reading of research papers based upon the questionnaire method commonly reveals a disingenuous avoidance of rather fundamental questions such as: If this research has established a relation between A and B, is this a

necessary relation? Will it always hold? Is it cross-culturally valid? Is it historically conditioned? Is it, in fact, merely a record of a relationship observed to exist at a given place, at a given time? Is it, in fact, anything more than a finding of possible interest to a local historian?

Research reports commonly find their way to publication two years or more after the field work on which they were based was completed. They are often felt by experienced practitioners to be already out of date. One may recognise how far things have moved on when one reads an account of what was said and done at the time of the investigation. The remedy for this defect is to situate every investigation in history; to interpret the data on which it is based, and the connections established between the data, as the record of a historical moment already in the process of transcendence.

Research approaches that illuminate

Let us now briefly identify research approaches that satisfy the demands implicit in the above argument, that illuminate rather than obscure subjects of research. There is no problem in identifying several, and no possible challenge to their academic acceptability. First, there is *history*, which attempts to understand social events in terms of time and change. Second, *anthropology*, which encompasses the primary inter-related processes in a total social system. Third, now attracting increasing attention, is *biographical analysis:* the attempt to understand the actions of an individual in terms of his life history and his "project", or life-plan. The aims of such approaches are *not* to identify supposed permanent relationships between quantitative variables but to illuminate individual lives as well as social relationships, processes and systems; to understand the particular instance; to make transparent what was opaque; and to connect discreet events by a tissue of associated occurences each of which is in itself intelligible.

Qualitative methodology and action research

Within the discipline of sociology, there has always existed a research tradition based on qualitative methods of investigation which concerns itself more with the "inner" aspects of man's behaviour:[15]

—"those research strategies, such as participant observation, in-depth interviewing, total participation in the activity being investigated, fieldwork, etc. which allow the researcher to obtain first-hand knowledge about the empirical social world in question. Qualitative methodology allows the researcher to "get close to the data," thereby developing the analytical, conceptual, and categorical components of explanation from the data itself—rather than from the pre-conceived, rigidly structured and highly quantified techniques that pigeon-hole the empirical social world into the operational definitions that the researcher has constructed."[16]

For many years the academic respectability of these methods was denigrated, as sociology struggled to establish itself as a social science through immitation of the natural sciences. However, most sociologists now accept an "action theory" model of reality, derived at perhaps from Weber's concept of *verstehen*, or understanding. This has been widely interpreted to mean an intutive and sympathetic understanding of our fellow man, his motives and the meanings which he attaches to his social world.

Action theory, in contrast to orthodox approaches, requires us to consult the actor (or *individual*) in a particular context in order to understand *his* understanding of the situation in which he acts. It regards as illegitimate an approach that simply records the behaviour of the person, attributing to him intentions that appear plausible to the investigator. It is useful in this respect to reflect on the thought of Husserl, the founding father of a school of philosophy called phenomenology. He asserted that intentionality is an essential property of consciousness. This is equivalent to saying that to be human is to have intentions towards the world. Is this not a proposition to which we would all surely assent? If we live in a state of having intentions, a cause-effect model of the individual is inappropriate. Human action is not to be understood by using only a Freudian model of the past, nor a simplified model of intentions for the future. A method of investigation is required that recognises that human action occurs along a time dimension. It must recognise the relevance of such concepts as process, change, phase, sequence.

Phenomenological approach

The phenomenological approach which at present commands wide acceptance in sociology posits that each person constructs his own social reality. It says that there is no given social system like education existing in nature, but that such systems rest only upon the assumptions that people make about education and the understanding they have of it. The problem, therefore, becomes not to understand a *given reality* by the methods of natural science, but to elucidate the social system as an outcome of what people already understand. Certainly, there is a reality surrounding us which we need to understand. It is the task of research, however, to show us that the reality proceeds from our own mental process. The sociologist is thus concerned not simply with what is objective, but dialectically with the inter-relation of objective and subjective.

Orthodox empirical research methods used in isolation manifestly fail to reflect this relationship. Their weaknesses are found both in shortcomings of the actual procedures, and in the broad assumptions about the structure of reality that are implicit in the application of these methods.

Alternative Methods

We have pointed out that one may use historical, anthropological or biographical methods to investigate social processes. Are there any alternative sociological methods ? Recently some sociologists have developed alternatives to the traditional research tools which do not rely on statistical validation.

Theoretical criteria evaluation

To deal firstly with sampling: Glaser and Strauss[17] have developed a qualitative sampling method which is evaluated in terms of *theoretical* rather than statistical criteria:

> "Theoretical sampling is the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyses his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges. This process of data collection is controlled by the emerging theory, whether substantive or formal."[18]

The important difference between statistical sampling and theoretical sampling is that (a) statistical sampling methods

rely on a preconceived theoretical framework (which necessarily implies that a series of value judgements have been made prior to empirical testing), whereas (b) theoretical sampling methods are based only on "..... a general sociological perspective ....."[19] and on a general subject or problem area (such as why some adults experience problems in retraining programmes, or why certain individuals make more use of adult education opportunities than others). There are other important differences between theoretical and statistical sampling, including the method of testing the adequacy of the sampling technique. The adequacy of the theoretical sample is judged on a more direct level, employing external criteria: how broad was the sampling of the various groups; how closely did it relate to the categories established by the researcher for study; and how closely did the selection of categories relate to the emerging theory?

Thus, the inadequate theoretical sample can be judged without having to delve into complex statistical procedures. The criteria are based partly on "common sense" or general experience, and partly (and more importantly) on a critical and sociologically-informed analysis of the degree of cohesiveness and integration of the theory. It is apparent that theoretical sampling makes more demands on the judgement of the researcher and depends thus to a certain extent on the confidence which he feels he can place in the stability and integration of his theory. There are no single techniques of data collection which are specifically appropriate in theoretical sampling. Different types or "slices" of data may be used to contribute to the overall perception of the situation or process under study. The qualitative methodologists accept that there is a rich diversity of methods of obtaining knowledge about social phenomena. The greater the number of methods and sources of data, the richer becomes the overall perception of the situation and of the participants' definitions of it. We take up this point below.

Participant observation method

Of all qualitative social research methods, the most widely used is participant observation. Participation observation is a

method in which the researcher participates in the situation under study. He does this either openly, in the role of researcher, or covertly, as a member and observes the behaviour of the people involved over some period of time. The important difference between participant observation and its counterpart in orthodox methodology, the interview, is that in the participatory method, behaviour is observed first-hand whereas in the latter behaviour is reported by the respondent. Becker and Greer[20] have shown, in a comparison of participant observation techniques and interview techniques applied to medical students' behaviour, that there are at least three aspects of investigations which are not adequately explained through the use of interviews alone.

The first of these is what they call "learning the native language," or correctly interpreting in-group expressions. Secondly, there are matters which people are unwilling or unable to discuss in an interview situation. It is often the case that small events are so unimportant to people that they will not perceive them as having any relevance to the researcher's question and will be unable to answer fully even when questioned directly. In addition, there are, of course, the usual problems in interviews associated with private or embarrassing experiences. Finally, there are situations where individuals perceive events or other individuals in a systematically distorted way, through a "distorting lens." Participant observation makes it possible to check the perceptions of individuals against others and one's own perceptions of the same situation. Thus the main feature of participant observation is that it provides much richer data, and can be used not only to illuminate a particular social process or event, but also to illuminate the data yielded by other methods, notably interviews and questionnaires.

Critical incident method

A method of investigation which is truly illuminative is the "critical incident" technique. In using this method the researcher moves into a critical situation, or into one in which a critical event has occurred. By unstructured and non-directive interviews, as well as by observation, he constructs an account of the situation, or what may have happened. The principle is

that such an incident lights up the positions that people hold in relation to their roles, each other, the ruling ethos, the ruling elite, etc. The development of this technique embodies fundamental implicit critique of the orthodox survey approach. It is that the essential reality which the investigator is seeking to uncover is not visible during the routine running of an institution or social system of any kind. It only becomes visible in "the moment of truth" when there is a dramatic confrontation, an unforeseen emergency, etc. Such crises expose the attitudes of participants by putting them on the spot in a way that a "scientific" questionnaire cannot.

Action research: Bogey of the academic system

"Action research" is the bogey of the academic system, which shrinks from the prospect of uncontrolled variables. From the point of view of the policy-maker, however, action research is very much what is required. The responsible administrator may not be in full agreement with Karl Marx, but he does commonly share with him the view that in research and academic work generally the point is not to understand the world but to change it. He wants to plan programmes which have some promise of achieving their purpose. If a good result follows an act of intervention, he is ready to assume a casual connection between the two. The research approach which would yield the necessary insights would be that which monitors a programme of action over a long period, perhaps as long as 20 years, feeding back data and observations to the point of decision at all times. Such programmes of action and research would be especially valuable if carried through in a given local community, perhaps on the scale of a town or a rural district. One example might be an attempt to provide abundant educational opportunities to a community over a decade or perhaps even a generation and monitor the consequences.

We have dealt very briefly with a limited number of qualitative methods, and our main purpose has been to draw out the major differences which underlie the uses of both quantitative and qualitative methods. We have not attempted to map out the many alternative methods which have been developed in recent years, which task has already been achieved by others more qualified than ourselves.[21]

Finally, we should remark that our argument does not suggest that "head-counting" measurement surveys should not take place at all. On the contrary, they are often necessary, especially for administrative purposes. The decision-maker needs to know how many people there are, where they are, their employment patterns, income distribution, educational qualifications, etc. Perhaps, it is purist to insist, as does one professor in the University from which we write, that such exercises should be called "community diagnostic surveys" and must be distinguished from "research" which has to be guided by theory and should seek to develop, validate, or invalidate specific hypotheses.

"Triangulated" research

The point we emphasis is however, that whether local headcounting surveys are called "research" or not, they must not be allowed to become the major form of research activity in community development and adult education. They are concerned with the outcomes of processes rather than with the processes themselves. They should be used to support or to highlight particular aspects of investigations. As a general rule, they should not be used in isolation. Wherever possible, the researcher should "triangulate," or use more than one method. All research methods involve valuations of behaviour, and different methods provide different *types* of knowledge. We are not advocating a reliance on any single method; we urge, rather, that qualitative and phenomenological research methods should gain a wider acceptance in teaching and research in general.

NOTES

[1]The "scientific" methods used widely in research in adult education were originally developed for the study of agricultural techniques. Some of the terms used in social and scientific research today reflects these origins, e.g. "treatments", "blocks", etc. See also M. Parlett and D. Hamilton., *Evaluation as Illumination : a new approach to the study of innovatory programs*, Edinburgh: Centre for Research in the Education Sciences. University of Edinburgh, 1972.

[2]W. J. Filstead's introduction to his book *Qualitative Methodology* provides a comprehensive review of this debate, Chicago: Markham, 1970.

[3]For a full treatment of orthodox survey methodology see C.A. Moser, *Survey Methods in Social Investigation*, London: Heinemann, 1971 (2nd edition).

[4]For an orthodox view of statistical sampling see L. Kish, *Survey Sampling*, New York; Wiley, 1965.

[5]E. J. Webb. *et. al.*, *Unobtrusive Measures : Non-reactive Research in the Social Sciences*, Chicago: Rand McNally, 1971, p.1.

[6]See M. T. Orne and F.J. Evans, "Social Control in the Psychological Experiment, anti-social behaviour and hyponsis" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, No. 1. 1965.

[7]L. J. Cronbach, "Response sets and test validity", *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, No. 6, 1946.

[8]M. Benney and E.C. Hughes, "Of Sociology and the Interview", *American Journal of Sociology*, No. 62. July 1956.

[9]ibid.

[10]ibid.

[11]ibid.

[12]A useful review is provided by W.E. Deming, "On Errors in Surveys", *American Sociological Review*, 19 August 1944.

[13]A.V. Cicourel, *Method and Measurement in Sociology*, London, Collier-Macmillan, 1964.

[14]*Eysench Personality Inventory*, Personality Questionnaire, Form B, Item 32. London : University of London Press Ltd., 1963 (reprinted 1972).

[15]"The inner perspective places emphasis on man's ability to know himself and, hence to know and understand others through 'sympathetic introspection' and 'imaginative reconstruction' of 'd finitions of the situations', thereby emphasising one of the basic underlying assumptions of human behaviour: that man, being a symbol manipulator, is only 'understandable' through the perception and understanding of those symbols that are being manipulated." W.J. Filstead, op. cit., p. 4.

[16]ibid.

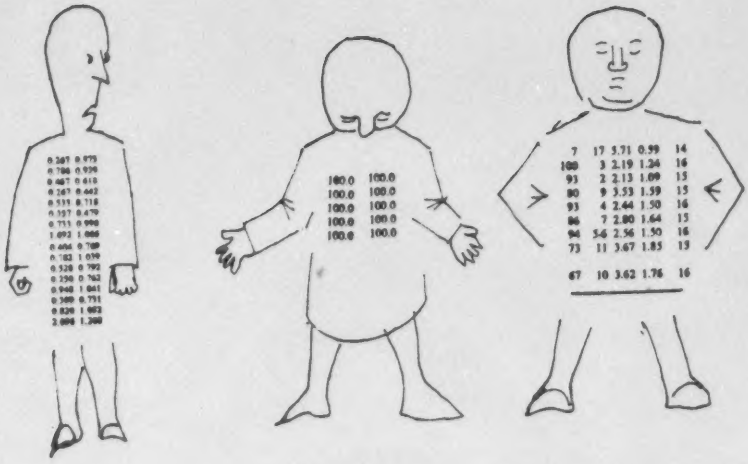
[17]B.G. Glaser and A. L. Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, Chicago: Aldine Pub. Co., 1967, pp. 45, 62-71.

[18]ibid, p. 45

[19]ibid, p. 47.

[20]H.S. Becker and B. Geer, *Human Organisation*, 16: 28-32.

[21]See, for example, W.J. Filstead, op. cit.; S. Bruyn, "The New Empiricists, the Participant Observer and the Phenomenologist," *Sociology and Social Research*, No. 51 1967; Glaser and Strauss, op.cit.; H. Blumer *Symbolic Interactionism*, Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969.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5

A Critique of Monopolistic Research

*Rajesh Tandon**

The social science research has developed into a large-scale enterprise in the twentieth century. A variety of research approaches are currently being used to investigate a wide range of social systems and phenomena. Professional researchers are being trained in academic settings; and they are utilizing their expertise in research to generate knowledge on a wide variety of subjects. Over the years, different disciplines have emerged in social sciences. And these disciplines generally focus on different themes and issues as foci of research. Psychology and sociology have dominated the field of social science research in twentieth century. However, new disciplines like social-psychology have also made their mark during the past two-three decades. Social science research has, despite the range of disciplines and subject matters, followed a major tradition which is still the dominant research paradigm. This paper is an attempt to critique this dominant social science research paradigm.

Characteristics of dominant research paradigm

There are several ways in which one can describe the salient characteristics of the dominant research paradigm. To make the readers familiar with the background of my critique, I am presenting here, rather briefly, my understanding of the classical research paradigm that has dominated social science research.

*This chapter was specially written for this book.

1. The purpose of research is to generate knowledge. This knowledge then adds to existing body of knowledge. It is then possible to develop general laws about various phenomena. Over a period of time, the truth about the nature of phenomena is established.

2. In order to develop such a generalizable knowledge that establishes the truth, methods of research have to be totally objective. The research situation should be controlled in such a manner that no spurious influence vitiates the inference. The researcher should be objective in his data collection and analysis. The degree of objectivity achieved has to be of highest order.

3. The research should use the thinking process and conceptualizations must be done to enhance knowledge. Manipulation of symbols and concepts is the main ingredient of knowledge-generation process. Observation and conceptualization are central methods of research.

4. The research entails communication of findings to other professional colleagues. Written form is most aptly suited for this. The knowledge generated through research has to be communicated so as to add to the existing body of knowledge.

In the classical research paradigm, rules for maintaining objectivity, observation and conceptualization, and communication are well-developed and strictly adhered to. Devisations from these rules are severely penalized through professional ostracization and criticism. Over the years, these rules have assumed the status of dictums and have become sacrosanct.

Critique of the Dominant Research Paradigm

The above description of the salient characteristics of dominant research paradigm is intended to provide the basis for the critique that is presented here. This critique will focus upon each of these characteristics separately.

(a) *Absolutist Critique*

This critique is aimed at two aspects of the first characteristic of the dominant research paradigm. Firstly, the limited purpose of knowledge-generation can not be accepted in the present context. While in natural sciences, pure research and applied research fields have developed considerably, it is not so

in social sciences. Unlike scientists and technologists, social sciences do not have a trained set of professionals to utilize their research. Therefore, knowledge-utilization is left to the administrators, policy-makers and programme-designers. This explains the wide gap that presently exists between the available knowledge and its utilization.

Moreover, the complete lack of concern with utilization of generated knowledge leads to research that is irrelevant: research that can not be used to improve our social, economic and political systems; research that can not assist men and women to guide their own destiny. It is, therefore, questionable whether poor, third world countries can afford social science research that borders on irrelevance.

The second aspect of absolutist critique is aimed at the fanatical position of social science research for the discovery of the truth. Influenced by the research paradigm of natural sciences, soial science research has also assumed that there is one truth about social phenomena.[1] The reality of social systems and phenomena is not physically determined only; it is also socially constructed. As such, it is difficult to present a realistic representation of any social phenomenon by believing in one truth. This absolutist stance of social science research is further reinforcing the limited purpose of knowledge-generation because the criteria for evaluating such research are assumed to be totally internal as determined by the truth. The value of research, therefore, can only by judged by the researcher and his peers and not by the larger social system.

(b) *Purist Critique*

As mentioned earlier, the crusade for objectivity is practiced in classical social science research paradigm by several means. Control of various extraneous interferences is attempted through experimental and statistical methods. Therefore, non-experimental approaches and field studies are neglected for the fear of being "unscientific."[2] Under the guise of achieving objectivity, rigour is maintained by the researcher's control over the focus and methods of inquiry.[3] The researcher knows all and he controls the entire process of research.

The attempt to achieve objectivity by maintaining strict separation between the researcher and the subjects has severe problems. Firstly, the researcher shares the essential humanity with his subjects in social sciences. He is, therefore, subject to same laws that he is attempting to understand. Secondly, the sheer presence of another person has impact over the "subject."[4] The presence of the researcher influences the natural processes. Moreover, the process of research does have impact on field setting in ways that can alter what is being researched.[5] It is now amply demonstrated that the behaviour of the researcher in experimental settings has substantial impact over the quality of data collected.[6] In fact, the quality of data-collection can be significantly improved if the researcher develops rapport with the setting and people in that setting.[7] To that extent, the very act of strictly separating the researcher from the setting leads to poor quality of data. What was once assumed to be achieved through objectivity is really being distorted by it.

(c) *Rationalist Critique*

The overemphasis on thinking and conceptualization is based on a very limited view of man and his abilities to learn and know. The classical research paradigm has, in the interest of reducing subjectivity, emphasised the thinking process as a way of knowing. The feeling and acting processes have been neglected largely. To the extent that human beings as researchers are thinking, feeling and acting beings exclusive focus on thinking denies their feeling and acting sides. It is generally claimed that natural science researchers can avoid their feelings from influencing their inquiry. In a study of scientists working on the Apollo-Moon project, it has been shown that their sensory experiences made significant impact on their research.[8] Feeling as a mode of knowing has also been clearly emphasised in social science philosophy. Polanyi describes the research process as moving from tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge.[9] Tacit knowledge is sensory and, therefore, in the realm of feelings.

Similarly, acting as a mode of knowing has been emphasised in action-research.[10] In order to understand a system or phenomenon, one can attempt to change it. Certain aspects of a social system can only be understood by acting on them.

"knowledge from action" is an important and useful direction in which some research is beginning to be carried out.[11] It is, therefore, possible to engage the entire fuculties of thinking, feeling and acting in research process.

This critique is relevant from another perspective. Research implies knowing; and knowing is based on learning. Therefore, theories of adult learning can illuminate approaches to research. The dominant research paradigm is based on a truncated version of adult learning. There are four types of adult learning processes[12] : Concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. The dominant research paradigm only supports two of these: reflective observation and abstract conceptualization. The other two modes of learning, concrete experience and active experimentation, are deemphasised. This limitation, therefore, constrains the classical research paradigm in two ways. Firstly, those persons who are not comfortable in observation and conceptualization modes of learning, do not easily enter the research profession. Secondly, even those who are strong in these two modes and engaged in research, loose some of their insights by denying or neglecting the other two modes. To that extent, the rationalist critique questions excessive reliance on thinking, observing and conceptualizing as main modes of knowing and research.

(d) *Elitist Critique*

The final critique of dominant research paradigm is aimed at its elite control over the techniques of research and the outcome of research. As argued earlier, the techniques of research are presently available only to a body of professionals who are enjoying elite status. Similarly, the outcome of research is essentially controlled by the researchers, journals and publishers as the dominant form of communication is written. Personal status, copy-rights and other advantages are gained by this research. However, those who assist the research process as respondents or "subjects", those who are researched, have no control over the research and its outcome. The people, systems and settings being researched are mere objects who help provide the basic data for knowledge, but they have no control over

that knowledge. This is an ethical issue in so much as the providers of information are denied any control over it.

It is also a political issue in that knowledge is power and it is further enhancing the power of the elites. Those who are presently powerful, have the expertise to generate knowledge themselves or the resources to acquire/hire researchers to generate knowledge for them. The dominant research paradigm tends to ignore these ethical and political issues. It is also possible that this research paradigm is dominant because it supports and strengthens the elites.

In sum, this paper has been an attempt to provide some basic critique of dominant research paradigm. It is hoped that this has added to the theory papers in this volume. New directions and different approaches to research in social sciences have to take these critiques into account.

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PART II

PRACTICE

6

Participatory Research or Pretense? Reflections on the Research Phase of an Indonesian Experiment in non-Formal Education

*Nat. J. Colletta**

In Indonesia today, there are 33 million people over ten years of age who have had no schooling. There are a further 26.5 million children who attended primaryschools, but dropped out before completing their education at that level. It is estimated that only 47 pupils of every 100 enrolled ever reach the sixth and final grade.[1] Drop-outs and those who did not enrol in any school now form the majority of youth in the country who have little chance for further formal schooling or training.

In order to provide inereasing educational opportunity for primary school children between the ages of seven and 12, a massive construction programme was called for by Presidential Decree in Indonesia's second five-year plan (Repelits II, 1974-1979). This was designed to accommodate 80 to 85 per cent of the primary age group by 1980.[2] Even if this target is met, there still remains 15 to 20 per cent of school age children, totalling some five million, for whom education canot be provided under the formal system.

In addition to the nearly 60 million adolescents who never attended school, or failed to stay the course, there are many

*The material was originally prepared as a paper for the Adult Education Conference. Toronto, April, 1976. It has been edited for use here.

millions of older people—farmers, rural women and unemployed youth—who constitute a further massive group in need of education and training.

Indonesia has an approximate population (mid-1975) of 132 million. About 82 per cent of this total live in rural areas and 83 per cent of those are engaged in farming, which accounts for 43 per cent of the gross domestic product. Of these Indonesians, 90 per cent have never attended school and only 75 per cent of the 10 per cent who did attend schools completed six grades. The national literacy rate in 1971 was put at 60 per cent. It was higher among males (71 per cent) than females (49 per cent) and lower in rural areas (55 per cent) than in urban regions (79 per cent).[3]

The position in Indonesia today is that under Article 31, Section I, of the 1945 Constitution "Each citizen has the right to education." In practice, however, the formal system cannot cope. Recognizing these problems, and the prohibitive cost of providing universal schooling, the Government decided to develop a non-formal system for the mass education of youths and adults. Such a system was to bring educational opportunity to those outside the traditional system of schooling and those in need of a type of education that the formal school was unable to provide. The Government has identified the following groups as priority targets for non-formal education and training:[4]

1. School-aged children with no opportunity to enrol in a formal school.
2. Drop-outs at various levels from the formal system.
3. Youths who have left school but still need additional knowledge or skills to function more efficiently within national development programmes.
4. Adults in need of additional learning, new skillls and attitudes to help improve their general well-being and contribute to the national development.

From its planning survey, the government realized the qualitative and quantitative limitations of the formal schooling system in meeting the educational demands of a modernizing society and, in particular, the problems related to the rural environment.[5] The challenge facing non-formal educators is firstly to identify the needs of new learners, especially in rural

areas, and then to mobilize such resources as are available to meet the requirements effectively and inexpensively.

To meet the challenge the Office of Educational Research and Development was asked by the Minister of Education and Culture to suggest and develop a National Strategy for Non-Formal Education. The Division of Out-of-School Education and Sports was assigned responsibility for implementing Indonesia's non-formal education programme.

Toward a community learning system

In the autumn of 1974, the Indonesian government invited me to serve as a consultant in non-formal education. The United States Agency for International Development (AID) agreed to fund my stay in anticipation that a project which AID might finance would result.

Broadly, this work included assessment, experimentation, training and policy planning, but as it turned out the main effort developed in the area of "action-research", or an integration of experimentation and assessment. Early efforts to develop an abstract national strategy without reference to village realities, resulted in considerable frustration and inadequacy so we began with the hypothesis that a realistic national strategy would have to be evolved inductively from the bottom up rather than deductively from the top down.

Preliminary investigations uncovered a wealth of community resources, both material and human. There were agricultural extension programme, health faimily planning and skills training services, some run by the government and others by semi-government or voluntary institutions, such as women's groups, co-operatives and scouting movements. There were also many talented people available from local artisans, entertainers and religious leaders, to teachers, health workers and agricultural extension agents. What was lacking, however, was a co-ordination of efforts. In fact, groups frequently worked at cross-purposes with each other. This was particularly noted with external agents, such as agricultural extension workers, when it came to work within a community. Their efforts were usually based on pre-concieved notions originating from distant Jakarta as to what people "wanted" or "needed." It was soon apparent that there was seldom a direct link between the villager's needs

and programmes eventually evolved. The "development" perspective was, thus, fundamentally false. Instead of seeing the community requirments as a network of interrelated concerns, problems were isolated and tackled as if they were unrelated to the rural people. There were skill training schemes, but few tools were provided and little thought was given to market demand for production.

In brief, the bureaucratic solutions proposed in Jakarta all too often were dismal failures in meeting the needs of rural people. In evaluating these schemes, as well as in planning them, there was a blatant lack of concern for village-level opinion.[6]

Recognition of these shortcomings led to the design of a major experiment in "action research" and the development of a community based learning system. This system is fundamentally a network of relationships between learners and their needs and the learning resources (human and material) for the development of that community. From this experiment, the Office of the Educational Research and Development hopes to draw lessons for its national policy and planning.

The experiment is based on two assumption :

1. That a "vacum ideology" of development which considers the village as backward and without resources is incorrect. In fact, the community possesses most of the resources necessary for its own development, and thus it can produce a natural growth from within through its own human and material assets.[7]
2. That the abstract bureaucratic standardization and compartmentalization is dysfunctional in meeting realities as they exist in the village. Development depends largely upon the ability to see human problems and possible solutions as a *gestalt*—or many pieces of puzzle which must be fitted together to find a solution.

Development projects and programmes should not be viewed as isolated actions, but as interventions in the social process having implications for and repercussions on all aspects of society. For instance, crop diversification (production) is related to family planning (reproduction), to nutrition education (consumption), to effective management (distribution) to open channels of communication (education), etc.[8]

The key activities of an active and correct management-resources-learning system are : (1) to devise appropriate participatory research activities to ensure commitment, establish priority learning needs, identify existing resources with the community and locate resources which have to be procured externally; (2) to translate learning needs into functional educational content with motivational appeal; (3) to devise, locate or develop local structures and strategies to get "essential" programme content out through community channels. Success in rural development schemes, in which literacy is one of the components, calls for correct leadership and "...correct leadership can only be developed on the principle of from the masses."[9] This basically means gathering the views of masses (participation), taking the results back to the masses (distribution), and explaining and popularizing them (education) until all are agreed on what is to be done (organization), and decisions are then acted upon (actualization).

The process of creating a community learning system is not simply a matching of learning needs with available resources. Some of the organizational components are at district level, usually technical resource teams, and these must interact and work with clusters of indigenous learning groups in each of the surrounding villages. The task force of a community learning system is seen to be comprised of the village people themselves (the learning of "inner" groups) who possess a wealth of practical knowledge and are, in fact, a potent resource in themselves: and the "external" groups, regionally based and formally trained in development or extension skills, such as health or agriculture.[10] The experiment as envisaged and now being implemented involves the creation of prototype community learning systems in two Indonesian regions, South Sulewesi and West Java.

Against this background, the remainder of this chapter deals with experience encountered prior to and during the attempt to implement a participatory research strategy through a field operation seminar in the early phases of the project.

The Jakarta dialogue

The planning began in the Jakarta Office of Educational Reseach and Development. At the same time as we were looking

for a method to identify "unused and under-utilized" learning resources for an Asian research project, we were also working on the research component for the US AID community learning systems project. It could not be said to be an ideal start, but circumstances dictated how we should proceed.

The central issue in our resource assessment debate soon came to light: Were we going to employ an externally determined traditional research design based upon preconceived theories, concepts, categories and modalities of analysis outside the villagers' frame of reference? Or were we going to utilize a new research strategy which would concentrate on the villagers themselves. identifying resources from which catagories, concepts, modality of analysis and theory would evolve?

In Jakarta, as we developed ever more sophisticated, abstract research instruments founded on western ideas, we began to wonder if we were, in fact, gearing up to obtain information "objectively" gathered, but which, in functional terms, would contribute little to our understanding of village reality. It all suddenly came together! The process had to be conducted in reverse! If villagers could identify their own learning resources, then planning would naturally emerge from within. It was in this way we eventually proceeded.

One of the first problems was to convince my western-educated Indonesian counterparts that the Western research model might be fallacious. And that villagers were capable of articulating their own learning needs and identifying the resources at their disposal.

As I argued for a new research design, my counterparts pressed for "instruments," "conceptual categories" and other "scientific" elements of a traditional research model. Finally, my challenge to give the emergent design a try through a field operations seminar in one of our project sites, South Sulewesi, was accepted when I vowed to take full responsibility.

The initial field research in the project area was based on the following assumptions:

1. Resources assesment, like need assesment, cannot be done for the people, but only with their full participation. Thus, the mobilization and use of resources are tied to community mobilization and demands.

2. Participation assumes that community members can recognize their problems, communicate their needs, then organise and manage their own resources in order to solve their own problems.
3. People are capable of self-development, if encouraged to mobilize their potential faculties, talents and internal resources. This by no means implies a one-side approach to development. If planning and development from above are to be effective, it must be done through local participation to develop solutions to existing problems, which community dwellers themselves understand.
4. An essential part of a community learning resource assessment is to identify what is required from outside. This would necessitate district level technical resource teams working with the community.
5. The assessment of community learning resources and needs should be a continuous process to reflect changing problems and resources.

In sum, it was decided that the research would apply the principle of engaging community members with only limited outside technical support staff. There would be no a prior instruments developed at ubran levels and injected into the community in an attempt to assess resources and needs. Any necessary instrumention would be developed by the participatory group of the community members themselves.

The field site

Biringkanaya is a cluster (*kecamatan*) of five villages (*desa*) in the municipality (*kotamadya*) of Ujang Pandang in South Sulewesi province. The field site was originally chosen because of its rural location, level of development, physical access and for administrative reasons. The total population of the cluster is estimated at about 26,000. Primary income is from wet rice agriculture, supplemented by fishing, cottage industries and horticulture. It is considered a poverty area with a yearly *per capita* income of about US $44. Its location between the larger urban environment of Ujang Pandang (15 kms) and the neighbouring provincial airport suggests high potential for rapid development.[11]

Composition of the committee

Deciding who was to serve on the committee was not as easy a matter as it may appear. Since the project was to be conducted in association with the provincial office of education and local government, this called for a series of meetings with the regional education officer and the Mayor (*Camat*) aud head of *Kecamatan* Biringkanaya. We encountered our first major obstacle with the Mayor. He was concerned with the definition of the word "participant." In brief, who was to take part in our participatory research effort? As we talked, it became clear we held very different ideas about this. We envisaged a committee of villagers, heads of households and others at the grass-root levels of the community. The Mayor felt that the participants should be village officials, government employees working in the district and members of his own staff.

We finally settled on a compromise set of participants with one major stipulation—that all participants should come from the *Kecamatan* and were "insiders" with the exception of a few resource people. These were to include a couple of assistants from the education department of a nearby university and extension personnel from the Mayor's Office and the Provincial Education Office. These resource people were to play a non-evaluative, non-directive, but facilitative role in the field research process. It was eventually agreed that the committee would be comprised of:

five village headmen (*lurah*);
ten villagers, five men and five women who were also elected members of the *desa* (village) social committee (LSD);
government extension officers working within the community on health, agriculture, development and education;
non-governmental representatives engaged in voluntary organizations, including scouts, women's groups and religious leaders.

In addition, there were usually one or two additional members, considered by the Mayor or village headman, as trend setters within a village and thus highly respected by the people.

After the question of participants had been decided upon, the *Camat* urged that we should use his mayoral urban facilities for the seminar. We politely refused, pointing out that we did

not wish to isolate the processs from the village. The question of payment for those attending the seminar was also raised. It was usual to pay an honorarium for civil servants attending seminars. We wanted to avoid any status distinction between delegates who were paid and those who were not and eventually it was agreed to change the name "seminar" to that of "community meeting" at which the village headman was to act as host, providing food and drink during session breaks.

The aims of the experiment were to show that villagers were quite capable of discussing and conducting their own affairs; to draw up a list of available resources; to elect a community (*kecamatan*) committee which would work with resource personnel to plans and implement activities within each of the five villages (*desa*).

The degree of villagers' abilities as action-oriented leaders was measured by a simple card scale of four grades (very active, active, adequately active, passive). Members of the resource team were informed of this scale, so that later it was possible to assess the villager's powers of the debate and processes of suggestion.

Biringkanaya—the field of operation

The community meeting was simple and informal. An introductory address was given by the mayor. Before opening discussions, he asked resource group members, particularly those from key government departments, to say a few words about the community and express their ideas of development problems. Although helpful, this did detract from the informality and free exchange of ideas which was what we had hoped to generate.

My Indonesian colleague then explained why we had assembled, spoke about community problems, ranging from illiteracy to financial difficulties, all of which concerned members themselves. He introduced the community learning system, as it was visualized, and pointed to the needs, problems, ideas for resource utilization. He stressed that it was they who should, and would, be doing the talking. Later, I described the model of community nonformal education which we hoped to test with them.

After prayers and a meal, the group re-convened and we then began to discuss the ideas which had been presented earlier. Initially, the discussion focused on community needs. Since the plan (as stipulated in Jakarta) had been to discuss resources, we directed discussion towards that topic implying that it would provide us with a clearer picture of the *kecamatan* (community) before embarking on needs and problems.

Later, the group divided into four. Each sub-group selected a chairman and secretary, as well as a resource person to act as facilitator. Before starting, ir was suggested that the groups should discuss three questions:

What resources are available in the village?

Can a practical list be made of the resources within the community?

How can other resources be identified?

Group discussions were dynamic and continued for more than an hour. The results were comprehensive and were reported by each group secretary to the general session which followed group discussions. A list was compiled of individuals with unique skills to offer. Government and private service agencies, commercial enterprises, village-based groups and institutions for entertainment, sporting and social events, were noted, as also were the actual buildings which might be utilized, not to mention a host of natural resources that could be "put to use" to improve community life. In fact, the participants were surprised at the wealth of resources they possessed.

Group members discussed the need to identify the learning requirements of the community and how such could be linked with available resources. It was suggested that participation should be expanded through village level groups visiting neighbouring (*kampong*) areas. After lengthy discussion, we left the region promising to return later to draw up plans for community adult education and development.

Back in Ujang Pandang

Our aim, according to Jakarta, was to find out what "unused and underutilized" resources were available. In the process of doing this we had also discovered the rich human resources available and learnt something of problems and

needs of the community. We had, indeed, killed two birds with one stone!

The day after the community meeting, we visited the provincial officials we had seen earlier and reported to them on the success of our efforts. We discussed future plans for establishing an official resource team to serve with the leadership committee which had been set up the previous day. The idea was that this team should soon be identifying or organizing village groups jointly to plan and then launch a community learning system along the lines of the model which had been discussed at the first community meeting.

After final discussions with the mayor, provincial education authorities and regional resource personnel, we returned to Jakarta to report our findings. An itemized classified list of resources[12] was submitted to the Asian Regional Project as the basis for a methodological research design "to study unused and under-utilized learning resources."[13]

A time for introspection : Lessons learned

What did we learn from our experiences in participatory research? *First and foremost*, we learned to modify our western ideas about participation. We found that we were not able to interact freely with villagers themselves, but we were forced to deal with a mediating group, consisting of village and district-level persons from the official authority structure. Although these persons participated in initial discussion, this did not imply that they would have a say in later decision-making processes dealing with the overall project. Nevertheless, it seems more than likely that the traditional Indonesian way will prevail; the opinions of the group will be considered, but outsiders will probably make the final decisions. Thus, a clear distinction must be made between (a) participation in discussion obtaining information from villagers (research), and (b) village level participation in planning, implementation, evaluation and other key decision-making phases of a project. At least, we did manage to involve village level participation in the first phase. Whether this form of participation is continued throughout the project remains to be seen.

In reality, community education programmes must be developed within a commonly accepted farme of reference. In

the Indonesian context, this means co-operation between villagers (insiders) and government officials (outsiders). Joint participation *between* these two groups must be continuous *throughout* the development process, in the planning, evaluation and decision-making stages, as well as in initial research. Only complete participation can create a proper sense of social consciousness about and commitment to community development. If research and development projects are designed at a national level, employing abstract theories, concepts and categories derived apart from the subjective reality of the recipient community, such projects are likely to be mis-understood and misapplied, quite apart from their dysfunctionality within the community.

A *second finding* was that participatory research did accomplish a number of important goals which might not, at first, seem obvious. It led to the pooling of ideas and information of both internal and external development agents, at the same time helping to create better understanding of and respect for each other, as villagers and technical personnel. It also acted as a strong motivational tool among villagers themselves, as their opinions were sought and considered and they began to feel they could influence and control their lives. It developed a sense of social responsibility for what was going on and a commitment to be actively engaged in community development and education.

It is essential that there is a direct link between initial discussions of objectives and the final planning of community development. There should also be similar links between such development and community education, for the two are interrelated. One is necessary as a means to achieve the other, but neither is sufficient in itself.

Similarly, it must be recognized that the process of defining and identifying, assessing and mobilizing *resources* cannot be divorced from assessing community *needs* and mobilizing community *demands*. The identification of resource is important, but the actual use to which they will be put to meet real community needs is vital.

This experience in participatory research leads us to some final conclusions. We were always aware of, and sensitive to,

the influences that we, as outsiders, could have unconsciously exerted on the community process. We had assembled people who, in the normal course of events, might never have met, to discuss ideas that only occurred to them because they *did* meet. It was difficult to determine how much of the participation really came from the group, and how much came from their sensitivity to what *we* were attempting to have *them* do. Is "participatory research" another exercise in self-delusion and the delusion of others? In other words, is it a new term coined for disguising the fact that outsiders are, in reality, routing the direction of community development?

Although we sought to be sensitive to village opinion, we were, undeniably, still alien elements entering the village domain. So questions still remain: Was this real participation or pretense? Do external agents of development actually strengthen their authority and dominance when they create participatory relationships in development? Do they in effect, use participation for dominance or for liberation?[14] Can participation be genuine as along as outsiders serve as the main catalysts for development?

Although such sceptical queries linger in our minds, we are convinced that in order to enlist the active, creative and imaginative participation of people identifying and solving their own problems they must, at least as a first step, be given the opportunity to participate. It is important also that external agents begin viewing their responsibilities in the development process as something other than control.

NOTES

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7

The Ambiguities of Peasant Participation : Problems of Participatory Research in a Non-Conventional Education Project in Senegal

*Olivier Le Brun**

Senegal's *Enseignement Moyen Pratique* (practical middle education) is an attempt to combine the major contributions of educational theoreticians Ivan Illich and Paulo Freire, and the Chinese principles of linking education with production and encouraging technological innovation by the masses.

Enseignement Moyen Pratique (EMP) was established as part of Senegal's educational reform in order to absorb the 80 per cent of primary school leavers not admitted to secondary schools, and if possible, the unschooled. EMP aims at providing these youths with training to facilitate their integration into the productive sector, thereby helping to reduce the rural exodus and, in the longer term, to stimulate the development of the rural area.

Since 1972, pilot projects have been operating in twelve villages with French technical assistance through IRFED (Institut International de Recherche et de Formation en vue du Developpement Harmonise). The projects are based on hypotheses drawn from IRFED's failure in Chad, from the evaluation

*This chapter is excerpted from a paper originally presented to an international seminar on 'Non-Formal Education in Rural Areas at the Instituto Mexicano de Desarrollo in July 1975.

of youth training experiments in Africa and from the saturation of the labour market in Senegal. Several major principles were identified : the integration of youth into the productive sector must be through self-employment, the training system must be linked to a definite project; the project must be undertaken by the peasants themselves with available resources; the EMP should be the instrument in accomplishing the project and should serve as the education system for the rural communities; to this end, Paulo Freire's conscientization process has been employed. Peasants are assisted to move progressively from the level of 'magical' consciousness, that which 'perceives events by simply attributing them to a higher power controlling them from the exterior' to that which enables them to perceive events 'as they really exist, in their logical relationships.'[1]

We will not discuss in this chapter either the educational aspect of this project or other innovative aspects of the methods being tested, which have already been outlined elsewhere.[2] Our aim is to analyse the role of peasants in undertaking a kind of participatory research about their own problems.

Assumptions and Obstacles

The EMP team based its work on the assumption that all educational systems are based on model society which must be produced. The task is therefore to enable the peasants to define for themselves, during a continuing dialogue, this model society, i.e., the socioeconomic transformation of the village.

During the initial discussions with the peasants, obstacles became apparent: When EMP workers suggested that the peasants themselves design a new education system for youth, they replied, 'Do as you always have, we can only follow your lead.' Peasants had become accustomed to a certain sort of relationship with the government. For this reason, they found it inconceivable that they should be entrusted with the task of defining and establishing an education system. The team considered these attitudes to be the result of a series of psychological blocks. 'We only know about farming and livestock,' replied the peasants.

In judging themselves incapable of designing a training system, they are unaware that they are themselves agents of an education system whereby they transmit their knowledge and experience to their children. Peasants underestimate their own worth, and schools reinforce this underestimation. Peasants have a subjective view of reality. This becomes especially apparent in generational conflicts. Parents criticize young people who subscribe to foreign cultural models; young people reproach their parents for their conservatism. And finally, the peasants adopt a defensive position: they feel powerless against the changes they are witnessing.

The first phase of the process of conscientization is to get past these obstacles. The EMP team attempted to make its position with respect to the peasants clear during the first meetings, by assuming a neutral role, that of facilitator and transmitter of information. In this manner, the team avoided becoming an authority figure, a situation which generally characterizes relations between peasants and government.

During the meetings, the team encouraged parents to become aware of their role as trainers. These first phase discussions led the peasants to analyse the unrest of young people, not as the work of 'trouble makers,' but as a collective phenomenon. These discussions revealed that all age groups wanted to find a collective solution to the problem of integrating youth into society: for the parents, it was vital to the survival of the village to keep the young people there. For the young people, individualistic solutions presented too many risks.

Once the peasants had agreed that change was necessary and that this change could only come through a project designed and undertaken by the society itself, the second phase had been reached. This stage requires an accurate self-analysis on the part of the peasants. Here, the role of the team is to help the peasant group to know itself and to identify its own problems objectively. This process deals primarily with the following question: Why are young people leaving the village? The peasants saw the exodus as a phenomenon touching all aspects of social life. They concluded that the rural exodus was the result of a discrepancy between the actual socio-economic level of the young people and their aspirations. Young people

no longer accept village social relationships. 'They want to marry more freely; they are no longer content to see the property and resources of their parents, which they have contributed to accumulate, inherited in part by distant cousins; they are embittered by their parents who "waste" the money they have been given and who cede them too small a share of the collective property, etc...'[3]

In their quite thorough analysis, the peasants identified socio-economic structures and their functioning. During meetings with EMP agents, they stressed the following elements of the peasant economy: low level of capital accumulation; near total absence of labour and crop diversification; export of commercial crops (groundnuts) and import of consumer goods, in other words a typical case of dependency.

Designing the project

Following this self-analysis, which lasted many months, the third phase was naturally the designing of the project. The project was designed in stages during discussions revolving around the question : How can we create jobs which would integrate young people into the productive sector?

The following solutions were agreed upon :

1. Increase and diversify crop grown and take advantage of natural resources in the area.
2. Market crops locally in order to stimulate the production of additional goods and the development of new techniques.
3. Look for appropriate technologies, either local or foreign, in order to create local employment (for example: collecting rain water for dry season crops; preserving of vegetables; weaving and dyeing of fibres).
4. Modify trade patterns by reducing imports of consumer goods and increasing imports of implements of production.

The contents and organization of the training were deduced from this socio-economic model which aimed at the reorientation of village resources.

The peasants, research efforts were undoubtedly very useful. Firstly, by considering their own situation, the peasants made

some very accurate analyses, especially with respect to rural exodus. It should be noted that it took time to achieve these results. It was only after the peasants had rid themselves of their subjective interpretation of reality that they were able to undertake research.

Secondly, the research process changed the research agents themselves. The peasants, after having accepted the need for change, searched for and found the causes of the exodus, which enabled them to propose and undertake a collective solution to the problem. They had therefore moved from thought to action: this is conscientization.

The significance of the process

I would now like to consider the significance of this process.

1. First, one might ask whether the peasants' analysis of their society in terms of dependency is not the result of the image that the EMP had of the society. EMP subscribes to the dependency theory which has become quite fashionable in development circles during the last few years. And it is EMP workers who organize the meetings and who reconstruct the thoughts of the (often illiterate) peasants in documents. These thoughts are therefore undoubtedly reformed and directed, especially since it is probable that, as is often the case in surveys undertaken in Africa, peasants, out of politeness and a desire to be left in peace, say what their interlocutors expect them to say. Of course, this type of self-analysis, although more or less directed, must not be likened to standard surveys. The relationship established with the population is quite different. EMP team members are nonetheless government agents and the peasants know it all too well.

If peasant society was analysed according to the dependency theory, it is reasonable to expect that the proposed actions resulting from this analysis would be those of a 'reoriented' development: an internally directed development strategy is the logical political extension of the dependency theory. This theory is flawed by the the fact that it takes only appearances into account. Forgetting that the society is divided into social classes, it is unable to explain the mechanics of exploitation. The internally directed development strategy is therefore very

vague: it aims at the maximum local use of economic surpluses rather than the transformation of production relationships.

2. One might ask whether, in this particular case, the conscientization process was not biased by the fact that the experiment was government initiated and, moreover, took place with foreign technical assistance. Have the peasants' attitudes during the first phase been misinterpreted? Is it not possible that the powerlessness which they expressed was designed to cover up a distrust of the government? This bias may be present throughout the process: the peasants agreed to play the game in hopes of reaping material benefits from the government. These hopes may have been reinforced by the presence of French members on the team. Europeans typically represent the power of wealth to the Senegalese masses. The fact that the French technical assistants developed excellent relations with the peasants and the Senegalese personnel, and that they proved to be very devoted, could not fundamentally change the situation. They are, whether they like it or not, government supported technical assistants.

This situation is especially acute in that the technical assistants are all senior project officers, those who in fact conceive and manage the conscientization process in the field. This is in direct conflict with the project's philosophy which is to enable the peasants to recognize that any change introduced from the outside can never truly be integrated into the milieu because it is not in keeping with the cultural model.

3. More fundamentally, is the conscientization process possible within an official framework? Senegalese peasants are, no doubt, well aware that they are being exploited. Politically speaking, it seems unlikely that EMP, as an official agency, can help them to solve the real, underlying problems. In this respect, the minutes of the village-level meetings are quite revealing: as soon as the peasants begin to hint at the issue of groundnuts, the EMP workers generally redirect the discussions toward training and the integration of youth.

The above points are hypotheses, they only through research in the field can confirm or disprove. They are proposed now only for provisional consideration.

NOTES

[1]Paulo Freire, 'L' education: practique de la liberte.' Paris, Cerf, 1973.

[2]See 'A Fissel (Senegal) less paysans prennent en main la formation des jeunes', *Educafrica*, Dakar, Unesco, 1974.

[3]'L' enseignement moyen partique: une formation a un developpement recentre pour inserer les jeunes dans la production', Paper presented by Enseignement moyen pratique at the meeting on Population Movement and Educational Systems in the Sahelian Region, Dakar, 26 May 1975.

8

Research as Education for Development : a Tanzanian Case

*Marja-Liisa Swantz**

The Tanzanian policy of development emphasizes development of people and not of things. In the rural sector this is accomplished through an intense programme of planned *ujamaa* (African socialist) villages with free, communal services and a production system based increasingly on communal cultivation. Already over half of the rural population is living in nascent village settlements which are being formed, through a process of trial and error, by exerting some pressure on the people to move but at the same time, allowing them a degree of choice in the location of their new homes.

The villages organize themselves as self-governing units and through village meetings elect their village chairmen, work leaders and members of various communities which operate under the Village Central Committee. The planning of village development is by design if not always by practice in the hands of the villagers.

In carrying out the villagization programme, a basic weakness in the administrative system has become evident.

In spite of emphatic political statements about the development being by the people and for the people, the administrative and also Tanganyika African National Union (TANU Party) District leadership have, in practice, shown little capacity to incorporate the villagers themselves in the planning of their

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own villages, either at the stage when village sites have been chosen or in developing the new village itself.

The problem is largely one of inadequate communication, although expediency also plays its part. In trying to achieve quick results, the slower and surer way of incorporating the villagers in planning is by-passed. The observation that two-way communication between the administrators, district Party leaders and the villagers has not been effective is based on studies made in villages at the stage of their formation and on experiences gained from student research in the Coast Region where the researchers helped to initiate village development projects and thus encountered and shared with the villagers their difficulties in efforts toward development.

In order that the larger sector of the population—the ordinary peasants—would have the right, not only to work hard and to produce, but to effectively influence their own development, ways and means are needed to facilitate their participation both in planning and implementation.

Research as two-way educative communication

It is proposed that a research approach to the task at hand can become a meaningful tool, not only in finding solutions to development problems, but in bringing together sectors of population and bringing about development of all those engaged in the effort. Research accompanied by participatory action can become a most effective means for opening up channels of communication and for engaging administrators, researchers and villagers in a common endeavour, with great educational effect on all of them.

Research as an academic exercise is an elitist concept. The prestige attached to scholarship, the status of a scientist, and the financial outlay needed for carrying it out, all tend to develop class-consciousness in those engaged in research as well as in those who become the objects of research. It can be asked, however, whether research by its design needs to have this elitist air. An intellectual exercise need not be an independent road to knowledge and discovery. Research, in its goals, methods and approach can become a basic tool in the transformation of a society. It need not be limited to those

with higher education, trained in methods and techniques, in organization of thought or formulation of problems and discursive logic. Ordinary villagers, administrators and teachers can become participants in, not only objects of, research.

Research can become a means of communication, an educative process in which the roles of the educator and the educated are constantly reversed and the common search for solving common problems unites all those engaged in the common endeavour. Differentiating factors are likely to remain, but they do not necessarily arise from the mystifying air that a scholar creates by holding on to his scientific knowledge as if it were his private possession. Nor do they have to stem from the design of the research.

Basic requirements of participatory research

Research that becomes an agent of transformation in a community must fulfil some basic requirements:

1. It needs to be planned so that at least part of it is of immediate interest to the people in the community studied so that the community can expect to benefit from its results.
2. It should involve the people, for whose benefit it is carried out, in the process of research, both in formulating the immediate problems and in finding solutions to them.
3. Research should incorporate into itself, as many as possible, of those working locally toward development of that community, be they village leaders, administrators, educators or extension officers.
4. The educational and motivational potential of such a committed research method should be fully utilized for the benefit of everyone involved in it.

The principle of local participation does not mean that the total research effort should be reduced to a level comprehensible to all participants. If the researchers and the village people share the same situation of change and are involved in it, the concerns of both groups are the same, although the conceptual levels differ. The scientists will have to be able to operate on two levels of analysis without separating one from the other. Their

task is to assist the non-professional participants to see the context and concomitants of their own problems and the direction from which the solutions can be sought. This creates awareness in people of their own situation and becomes a motivational force toward development. At the same time, there remains a level of analysis that requires greater abstraction which is not necessarily shared by the villagers. However, even methods of experiments alien to villagers become an accepted part of a study if the latter are included in the framework of broader research conducted for their own benefit.[1]

In the United Republic of Tanzania, several research projects on questions related to women and youth, using the approach described, have been conducted under the Bureau of Resources Assessment and Land Use Planning (BRALUP) in the University of Dar-es-Salaam, involving students as participants in the villages. The motivational and educational potential of the approach have been verified in relation to students, villagers and at least some of the teachers, village leaders and local officers.[2]

Pilot survey of forty-six villages

Recently, another experimental pilot survey of forty-six villages involved administrators, teachers and villagers of three districts in three different parts of the country. The method was based on the principle that the villagers themselves would be involved in evaluating their own level of education and skills; the extent of utilization of skills; reasons for their non-utilization; non-utilized natural resources; and training needs of the villagers in view of the village development plans.

The district, divisional and ward adult education officers were involved in organizing and carrying out the survey and in training the local coordinators for the work. The university and the Ministry of Development Planning staff, in cooperation with representatives from the Ministry of Education, Agriculture and Labour and staff from the Research Unit of the Institute of Adult Education and the Statistical Bureau, prepared the plan and assisted in interpretation of the approach and method to the local officers. Otherwise, the survey was carried out by villagers with the help of adult education officers and divisional and ward secretaries.

Organization of the study

Level	*Manpower*
Headquarters	8 Coordinators; 4 research assistants; 1 typist.
District	1 coordinator = Adult Education Officer (DAEO).
Division	1 coordinator = Adult Education Coordinator (AEC).
Ward	1 coordinator = Adult Education Coordinator.
Village	1 coordinator = Adult Education Coordinator (Head teacher) 1-5 assistant coordinators (chosen by villagers); ten-cell leaders; villagers in each household.

Steps followed

1. *Meeting with District Officers*
   The general Principles and approach of the study was explained to as many officers of the District Headquarters as could be present.
2. *Meeting with the District Adult Education Officer (DAEO)*
   The procedure, method and approach was discussed and the strategy to be followed agreed upon.
3. *Informing Divisional Leaders*
   Information was given about the survey and the date was set for a joint meeting.
4. *Joint meeting*
   The DAEO met with the Divisional Secretary and Divisional Adult Education Coordinator (AEC).
5. *Meeting of leaders in the Wards*
   Political leaders, local officers, teachers, medical workers, etc., discussed the plan and made suggestions about how it was to be carried out. Such participation was to prepare them to inform villagers about the plan, to assist them where needed, and to correct any misunderstandings that might arise.

6. *Meeting of village leaders*
The purpose and plan of the survey was explained to the Village Committee which then proceeded to elect village coordinators.

7. *Seminar of coordinators*
DAEO and the Divisional AEC explained at length the general purpose of the survey. Particular emphasis was placed on its aim to involve the villagers in their own planning. The plan was discussed step-by-step to enable the coordinators to act according to the instructions.

8. *Meeting of villagers*
In a general meeting, the plan of the survey was discussed as presented by the leaders and coordinators who had attended the previous meetings and seminars. Emphasis was put on the involvement of all the villagers and on their opportunity to put forth their needs, plans and opinions. Also emphasized was the fact that the results would remain in the village and be used by the Village Committee, the Ward Development Committee and the District Development Committee. Questionnaires were distributed to the ten-cell leaders present.

9. *Coordinators contact the ten-cell leaders*
Assistants for those households which could not complete their own forms were chosen for the ten-cell leaders. (This is the grass-roots level of the TANU Party structure).

10. *Filling in the forms*
The households were given one week to fill in the forms and return them to the ten-cell leaders who then gave them to the coordinators. Any household which had a literate member completed its own form.

11. *Coordinators summarize results*
The coordinators met, usually in a primary school and with the help of teachers and some older students, added up the results and filled in the summary forms which had been provided.

12. *Meeting of the Villagers*
In the final meeting, the coordinators made known the results of the survey so that the villagers were aware of

their own strengths and needs. An agenda was provided to help the villagers discuss their present situation and the potential and needs for further development. Recommendations were made for village development in terms both of its self-reliance efforts and of government input. Copies of meeting reports were made in triplicate with one copy for the village, one for the ward and one for the headquarters.

13. *Reports and forms collected*
Summary forms and reports of the village meetings were collected by the Ward Coordinator and sent to the district and to the headquarters for processing.

14. *Meeting of the Ward Development Committee*
Results of the survery were related to the existing and future development plans of the ward.

15. *District Development Committee*
Results of the survey and possibilities for incorporating them into the development plans were discussed. Final evaluation of the present strengths and needs was made.

Survey of skills

The survey of skills in each division was intended to cover all households. A questionnaire of twenty-five questions was to be answered in writing by some literate member of each household. If no one could perform the task, this fact was indicated on the form. In some villages, no households could fill in the forms themselves; in others 60-73 per cent of the households did not need outside assistance.

The questionnaires were administered by coordinators chosen by the villagers in the first village committee or village meeting, where the purposes and general approach were explained. The principal coordinator—usually a head teacher of the primary school—supervised the work, collected the forms and, with the other coordinators, added up the statistical information on a summary sheet which was provided. The main impetus of the survey at the village level was assumed to come through the involvement of all villagers in self-evaluation and through their meeting together to discuss their strengths, needs and plans.

The forty-six villages covered in the pilot survey were in Usangi in Pare District, Kilimanjaro Region, Ndetembela in Kyela District in Rungwe Region and in part of the Msoga Division in Bagamoyo District, Coast Region. Some were traditional areas where villages had not yet been officially formed, some were new villages in formation and some were *ujamaa* villages. The organization for carrying out the work was more easily accomplished in *ujamaa* villages than in areas where people were not yet organized in definite village units.

As could be expected, rather serious inaccuracies occurred both in filling in the forms and in tabulating the statistics. If the survey is to continue, modifications will have to be made and the questionnaire simplified further. However, the results showed that the proportionate number of literates, illiterates, educational levels and skills between various villages were correct, and the diversity of skills or their lack became evident. The information on the number and percentage of those benefitting from adult education programmes was the most accurate available to date on Tanzania.

The educational and motivational benefits of the method

The method was used as a means whereby those participating could be both motivated to greater action and educated to greater awareness of their potential, as well as incited to find ways for solving their development problems.

The whole process had an educational element:

1. It made the leaders learn more about procedures for communicating with people and gave them a method which they could repeat in their administrative duties and thereby avoid a 'commanding' attitude in relation to villages.
2. It gave the leaders a way of soliciting the peoples' own ideas and of helping them to take part in the planning of their own villages.
3. Those chosen as co-ordinators learned skills in handling questionnaires and processing the data from them.
4. It taught the village leaders and villagers the benefits of self analysis and how to go about it.

5. It taught people skills in answering questions and writing their thoughts and, at the same time, revealed weakness where people were unable to respond to the challenge. This negative learning turned out to serve as a motivational force for self-improvement.
6. In areas where villages had not yet acted as units, it created the begining of a common thinking process which prepared people for future planning on a village basis (This was the case particularly in Usangi).

Evaluation and results

How many of the motivational and educational goals could be achieved is evaluated above and in the following, on the basis of reports from final village meetings and from statements made by participants.

The villages were given an agenda to follow in their discussions. The items included the following topics:

1. Report of statistics obtained through the village survey and the discussion of it with particular emphasis on any new findings in relation to skills or natural resources.
2. Discussion on various aspects of development with the help of three major questions: What development efforts have been made so far? What plans are being carried out at present ? What are the future plans?
3. These questions were to be related to existing skills and strengths, and to needs and hindrances. The questions were asked in relation to agriculture, fishing, cattle-keeping, forestry, education, health, water, transportation, post, telephone, electricity, small industry, trade, minerals, etc.
4. Further questions were directed towards thinking about the discovered resources, training needs, the part that the village itself can play and the inputs required from outside.

Since the agenda was provided, the choice of subjects for discussion was pre-determined. However, many villages treated the agenda very freely and took up only subjects of special interest to them.

In an evaluation meeting with the village co-ordinators, the consensus was to recommend the survey for other parts of the country. Criticisms were directed only towards technical details. The following points illustrate the opinion of the co-ordinators:

1. The survey helped the people and the leaders to know the number of children who had not obtained a place in school, and thus the number of schools and classes that will be needed for universal primary education—an urgent national priority.
2. It helped people to know how many primary producers there are in the village, and the proportion of those who produce food to those who consume it. This helped in evaluating whether present food production was adequate for the village.
3. There was a recognition that the number of persons possessing special skills was limited and that there were relatively few work opportunities in the villages. This demonstrated that the need for diversification and training for more skills was urgent.
4. The survey helped people move toward co-operative working and planning. There was recognition that the survey had started people on more purposeful planning and determining the steps that the village should take for more self-reliant development.
5. The motivational aspect of the survey was acknowledged in that people came to recognize the need for increased literacy skills. The Adult Education Officers had already noted an increased attendance in adult education classes. Even those who knew reading and writing, when challenged to fill in the questionnaires, recognized a need for continued learning in order to manage such task.

In some vilages in Usangi people were enthusiastic about the village meeting which continued for many hours. Old people had a chance to express themselves and appeared as the experts, revealing things they had kept secret from the younger villagers. Thus there was a real sense of discovery and the significance of the older people in development became evident. On the basis of information from the elders, it was discovered

that the area had natural resources which would need to be investigated.

The village of Kilomeni discovered sufficient skills to start sawing boards and this led to an immediate cooperative action. The potmakers expressed their desire to extend their skill to making cups, saucers and dishes, and requested special assistance to do so. There was a general recognition that the survey had activated people in the villages. The opinion was expressed that more time should be given to such effort.

The main request that came from the village meetings was for personnel, *not* for money or big construction projects. Willingness to do manual work and to improve methods of agriculture, fishing or cattle-keeping was generously expressed. It is important to note that the training needs were given preference in all improvements relating to production and that the village itself was seen as the place where the training must take place. There was a general appeal for trained officers to teach the villagers improved methods of production. Specific skills directly related to the particular conditions of the village were requested, such as: rice-growing suitable to hillsides; how to connect pipes and make watering places for cattle; learning the dipping and injection skills for Masai cattle-keepers; and help in fishing under certain specific conditions for people living on the shores of a lake.

The discussion on village resources, training needs and other government inputs revealed that the present training schemes met specific needs inadequately and the extension officers spread their services too thinly without giving necessary time for teaching individual villagers. The discussions also revealed the need to bring training skills to the youth in the village itself, instead of taking them elsewhere in the primary stages of their learning. It is also a research recommendation of the writer that it is only after the youth have learned all there is to learn on the village level with the help of extension workers and others with needed skills, and after they have shown their aptitude in an ongoing village work project, that they should be sent even for short periods to larger training centres for more specialized training.

Conclusion

The survey method described above is one step further on from participant research advocated in the beginning of this chapter in that the people *themselves* carried it out. It shows that surveys can be planned so that their exploitative aspects are eliminated and they become both educational and motivational.

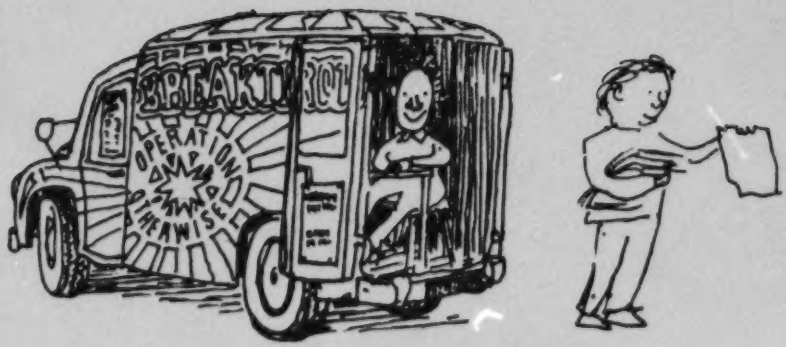
The survey can be the first stage for further research in depth, as will be the case in Bagamoyo villages where a longer participatory research project is planned to involve villages in the study of various aspects of folk sciences and methods of work in the wider cultural context. The practical aim is to help the villagers use their many traditional skills in village development.

Knowledge is a continuum, not isolated facts in individual minds here and there; so too is inquiry a continuum. It is not only the scientist who is engaged in inquiry; he shares this with others and merely brings his analytical tools to the common inquiry. It is the commonality of knowledge and of inquiry that makes it possible for people with different levels of formal education to work together for the common good. Such a research approach not only becomes a tool for development; it also operates as political levelling instrument to help minimize social and educational differences.

NOTES

[1]Editor's note: conversely, it seems that thanks to contact with previously alien village life, researchers' horizons can be broadened and their metods can become more flexible, and more respectful of village needs aspirations and (of course) limits.

[2]Project reports are published as BRALUP Research Reports (New Series), 'Youth and Development in the Coast Region of Tanzania', No. 6, 1974, and 'Socio-Economic Causes of Malnutrition in Central Kilimanjaro', No. 13, 1975. Two more reports on rural and urban women are being produced.


OPERATION
OTHERWISE

9

Research in the New Communities Project: an Urban Housing Estate in England

*Paul Fordham, Geoff Poulton, Lawrence Randle**

Adult education is one of the most under researched areas of British educational provision. Most professional adult educators—especially in universities—have either been concerned largely with administration or have concentrated on maintaining their position within particular teaching specialities. As a result, both provision of adult education and training are sustained more by reference to 'good practice' or tradition than to empirical studies or the theories which might be validated by them.

The New Communities Project arose from the interaction of fact and tradition.[1] The fact that students in adult education classes are increasingly drawn from the higher socio-economic groups and from those with a background of full-time secondary or higher education; and the tradition of university adult education in the United Kingdom, i.e., it should not only be concerned with the education of working class students but it has some accumulated expertise to offer in meeting their needs.

However, practice has here been singularly unsuccessful over the years, with students drawn increasingly from the higher socio-economic groups. Although the United Kingdom is still a country where three-quarters of the adult population left school at the minimum leaving age, less than half the participants in adult classes come from this large majority. If socio-economic

*This chapter was especially prepared for the present volume.

status is taken as the indicator, the facts are even more striking.[2] Some 64 per cent of a sample population surveyed in one important study in the 1960s were classified as from 'lower occupations,' but produced fewer than 30 per cent of the students.[3]

There have been a number of experiments which have sought to improve on present practice and to bridge the gap between the egalitarian tradition and reality. The work of Jackson and Lovett in Liverpool,[4] the development work of the Adult Education Department at the University of Keele, and the adult education component of broader educational and community development programmes[5] are all important influences. They have been widely discussed among adult educators in the United Kingdom and have led directly to our own proposal for an action research project to look at adult education on a municipal housing estate.

The aim was a clear and practical one: to develop new strategies which would increase participation in adult education in such areas.

The interaction of fact and tradition referred to in the opening paragraph was clear from the project's initial assumption:

> 'that adult education should seek to serve the whole community and not merely those sectors of it who currently take advantage of what is provided. Although adult classes are likely to remain a minority taste, there seems no reason why this should remain an unrepresentative minority.'[6]

The project could not attempt to embrace all the non-participators and it seemed that the most obvious areas of social deprivation were receiving at least some attention. It was, therefore, decided to look at a hitherto neglected and rapidly growing group and that the project would aim 'to increase the effective penetration of...adult education services in areas of urban overspill.'[7] In the event, the New Communities Project was established in January 1973 on the Leigh Park Estate near Portsmouth, in the country of Hampshire on the South Coast of England. The initial assumption and aim of the project were later (April 1973) to be given authoritative re-inforcement by

the report of the Russell Committee. The Committee gave particular attention to the disadvantaged[8] and asserted that,

> ...the task of the education service will be to collaborate with Social Services and other relevant departments in ensuring that disadvantaged individuals are not debarred by lack of education from active participation in the life of their local communities.[9]

The kind of 'disadvantage' in which we were interested was neatly referred to as:

> People...hitherto untouched by adult education...discouraged from participating by their...circumstances, by unsuitable premises, by a sense of their own inadequacy, by the fear of an unwelcoming bureaucracy in the administrative arrangements, or simply by the language we commonly use in describing the service[10]. They merit special consideration. They are all members of the adult community, entitled to benefit from adult education according to their need.[11]

The project and its setting

Until the 1940s, Leigh Park was the estate and gardens of a wealthy land-owning family. It lies some eleven miles from the centre of Portsmouth and well outside the city boundaries. However, Portsmouth Corporation was able to buy the land cheaply on the open market and thus continued its programme of slum clearance. Older areas of the city near the docks were demolished and the former inhabitants rehoused in dwellings built by the City Corporation at Leigh Park. Building began in 1948.

The 1971 Census of Population recorded that the estate had a population of 38,000.[12] The development covers an area of about 4 square miles and, although it has grown in a rather ad-hoc way over the last twenty-five years, is said by Portsmouth authorities to be complete. However, the Corporation still owns land around the estate and there could well be further house building in the future. The whole south of Hampshire county is scheduled for considerable urban development over the next twenty years and is one of the fastest growing areas in the country. Private and public speculative developement and acquisition of land has made both housing and land very expensive. All services, including education, have lagged behind population growth.

The administrative and local government arrangements for the area are complex. Portsmouth Corporation owns 9,000 out of the 11,000 houses and is also responsible, as landlord, for estate management; Leigh Park estate constitutes one-third of Portsmouth's housing stock. However, as we have seen, it lies well outside the city boundaries and was, until the reorganisation of local government in 1974, administratively part of the Urban District of Havant and Waterlooville. The residents were thus in the rather confused position whereby they paid rent to Portsmouth Corporation, received educational and technical services from Havant and Waterlooville Urban District, whilst social services were provided directly by Hampshire County Council. While the latter authority by 1977 had responsibility for educational and social services, housing on Leigh Park estate is shared between the Districts of Havant Borough and Portsmouth. Leigh Park is physically separated from the rest of Havant Borough where the bulk housing is privately built and owner-occupied. This means that the estate is not merely geographically distinct. It is also socially distinct.

Even though Leigh Park can be seen as a discrete geographical and social entity, it has no clear political or administrative status. Its demographic structure is related to Portsmouth's re-housing policy. The population is very young with over half under twenty-five years of age. Forty per cent is under fifteen years. Forty per cent of families have more than three children, compared with less than five per cent for the rest of the Havant District. In 1974, some 60 per cent of all children aged 3-5 in the Havant District were living on Leigh Park, despite the fact that the population of the estate comprised only one third of the total population of the District. Most of the people now work in industry on or near the estate, although there is still a dependence on industry in Portsmouth which has long been dominated by the naval dockyards. These, though declining, still provide over a hundred times the number of training opportunities for skilled workers as does local industry.

Industrial work on the estate itself tends to be in light industry, which responds quickly to changes in the economy either by sharp cuts, or by rapid increases in recruitment and production. The majority of firms either tend to employ women

for unskilled assembly work or to employ a large proportion of graduates from outside the estate to work with costly capital equipment. There is, moreover, bewildering variety of shift work for both men and women.

Housing has always outstripped the provision of other facilities. There were 13,000 people living on Leigh Park before there was a single shop. Today the estate has a central shopping area which is quite good for food and groceries. But there are no good department stores and little choice for commodities other than food. Apart from this, there are several clusters of two or three shops in outlaying areas of the estate.

Besides shops, the other social amenities now include a Working Men's Club, a community Centre and a bowling alley. There is no cinema, dance hall or sports hall and the Working Men's Club has been over-subscribed for long periods. Moreover, there is, both on the estate and in the Urban District, a general lack of commercial provision for entertainment. As with work and some vocational training, there is a dependence on Portsmouth for such facilities. Yet the public transport system is very poor. It does not cope adequately with taking people to work and it copes even less well with providing transport around the estate, getting children to school or delivering people for social entertainment or adult education.

Before the arrival of the Project's two research fellows,[13] adult education on the estate was largely confined to adult centres attached to secondary schools. It is one of these schools (Oak Park) which provided the first physical base for the Project. The Oak Park Adult Centre remains largest provider in the Havant area and is run by a full-time Principal with part-time assistance. In 1971-72, the centre had 2,668 post-16 enrolments. Only 24 per cent of these were from Leigh Park, although the estate contains 36 per cent of the population of the Borough of Havant. Three factors seem relevant to an interpretation of these figures: one is the age structure of the population; another is the nature of provision made by the centre; the third is the proximity of the centre to the estate.

Non-vocational, mainly recreational courses (for example, dressmaking, carpentry, keep fit, etc.) are the Oak Park centre's main provision, but there are also basic general education

126[illegible]

courses (for example, English, Mathematics, etc.). It is these courses which are most supported by Leigh Park residents. In other areas, courses are more usually provided by institutions whose main concern is with vocational education—technical colleges, colleges of technology and the polytechnics (for degree level work). The opening in 1974 of a new college of further education quite close to the estate has greatly increased local educational opportunities, especially for vocational courses.

Initial phase: contacts and strategy

It was assumed right from the start that, in the early stages, action would be more important than research and that our aims were unlikely to be achieved by traditional approaches. Problems of alienation from the 'education' label rules out any mere tinkering with existing provision. There had to be a range of new approaches: (a) to community involvement; (b) to the network of contacts and types of publicity needed to achieve this; (c) to the translation of perceived needs into educational needs and (d) to the kinds of programme which might be provided. These initial assumptions ran counter to those commonly heard in the locality—usually to the effect that low participation rates were due to apathy and that existing services need little alteration. We hoped later to be able to test all these assumptions (including our own). But the important first stage was to secure acceptance in the area. Without local cooperation, nothing could be done: that much was certain.

It was not an easy beginning. Two strangers moved into the Leigh Park estate early in 1973. They were bound to be rather conspicuous and to invite all sorts of questions about their reasons for being there. Even those who were sympathetic to the Project's aims were highly sceptical about what could be achieved and we ourselves had no very clear ideas about what we ought to do only that we could not hope to begin to conduct new experiments in adult education or to come to terms with what the needs of the area might be unless we could engage local people in a dialogue as equals.

As has been recently pointed out, needs are not 'objective and observable entities existing out there in the real world'[14]

but are partly created by the adult educator himself through a process of ascription or prescription. We sought to minimize this professional influence by seeking at the outset to arouse local interest and the expression of views about our work. Our first task, therefore, was not to do anything, but to spend six months listening to local people, talking with them, finding out what might be possible and deciding on the things to which people might respond.

It was through adopting this rather low-key view of their role that members of the Project team were able to allay most of the local fears and suspicions which were inevitably there at the beginning. The chief of these was that we were coming into the area to use the population as 'guinea-pigs' and would then write our Ph.D. theses, perhaps reflect badly on local people and go away again leaving a trail of resentment and confusion behind us. In the event, this early policy of doing very little except talk was very important. It meant that later a great deal more could be started than would have been possible without first allaying local fears. Moreover, hundreds of local people were mobilized to help themselves in a large number of different ways. The starting point for these approaches was always a group of people expressing their own concern rather than a class or course which was presented to the public as an option designed by an educational institution.

The strategy of developing contacts with local groups (for example, the Working Men's Club, churches, the Community Centre, the Pre-School Playground, educationists, social workers, local councillors and other individuals) did more than allay local suspicions. It enabled the team to know the locality well enough to base further action on the needs of the area as seen by the local residents themselves. And it allowed the team to make contact with organizations, like industrial firms and social services agencies, not currently involved in adult education who concerned with needs which required a contribution from adult education for their satisfaction. One way of making adult education more sensitive to local needs is to ensure that people working in it have relationship with other agencies and that both are capable of working together, where this is appropriate. The early 'low profile' startegy contributed to the

development of such relationships. Furthermore, the network of local contacts, once established, quickly presented opportunities for deeper involvement by the project team in a number of activities, like the development of pre-school playgroups, parental education and adult literacy.

The two full-time members of the project team acted as agents responsible for setting up a network of contacts within Leigh Park and depended greatly upon the supportive response of local people. Approaches employed included the utilization of census material and local records, and a series of interviews with local professionals, councillors and members of voluntary organizations. This developed into an initial strategy similar to that described by Tom Lovett.[15] The network was then built up through attendence at meetings, work in assisting local groups, and a process of referral from one individual to another who might be significant for further contacts and later development work.

This process led to a preliminary assessment of the opportunities for change and the directions in which change might be both feasible and desirable in relation to *prima facie* notions of local need. Much of the resulting work has been concerned with the self-realization of the potential of individuals and with the self-determination of groups.

Besides creating the local network of contacts, the team had to establish working relationships with the three existing providers of adult education, both at a presonal professional level and taking account of their demands as institutions. The latter turned out to be of immediate importance because of the structure of project finance. Most of the money was provided by the Department of Education and Science[16] as a direct research grant, but resources to support action programmes were to come directly from the local education Authority (Hampshire), the University Department of Extra-Mural Studies (now re-named Adult Education) or the Workers' Educational Association. This implied a strategy of working very closely with these agencies on jointly planned action programmes which it was assumed would continue to be provided under their auspices. The alternative was to secure the release of flexible finance for programmes of action launched independently by the pro-

ject. These could be designed either to illuminate factors relating to non-participation or to demonstrate viable strategies for increased participation which, once validated, might be adopted by the three donor bodies.

In the short run, the first strategy proved impracticable. In 1973, morale among local fieldworkers, professionals and voluntary workers seemed very low as a result of previous experiences, and because of limitations stemming from organizational and financial restraints. The alternative strategy had, therefore, to be adopted. This evolved into a situation where initiatives arose from the project team through which both fieldworkers, the team and local people might communicate with each other. For this, independent finance, or quickly forthcoming support from the donor bodies, was essential. We had to respond quickly and sensitively both to our informal networks and to local professionals. For the latter, we aimed to provide support through publicity, and an opportunity to engage local people in action and in dialogue about what they wanted. Ultimately, we sought to demonstrate that there was in the area a potential for change and increased response through more development work.

The aim of the project appeared to involve a large number of variables. This meant that, without prematurely judging the local situation and its causes (thereby overly narrowing down the focus of the project), the task could not be reduced to a number of unidimensional action programmes. It was acknowledged that this had implications for the degree of difficulty in measuring results.

The team accepted that their initial action programmes would be exploratory rather than scientific (i.e., clinical) and that their involvement with local residents could not be restricted to those areas which were currently defined by professional educators as 'adult education.' There was acceptance of the fact that their work might be seen alternatively as social work, community work or even political agitation. But whatever analysis might be made by professionals and others in the area, a commitment to local residents was paramount.

Second phase : operation breakthrough

After the initial, silent phase, we launched in September

1973, a relatively inexpensive publicity programme called 'Breakthrough : operation otherwise.' This was simple in conception and consisted of one intensive week of publicity in the shopping centres on the estate. A van was borrowed from a colleague on the University Extra-Mural staff and turned into a mobile office at each of the shopping centres in turn. Both the research team and their volunteer helpers handed out leaflets, gave information and advice, noted down names, addresses and interests and encouraged people to participate in completing questionnaires on what they would like to see impoved on Leigh Park.

Several hundred people were approached about existing opportunities, about other things that the project itself had by now come to accept as unmet local needs, and about what facilities the local people themselves wanted to improve.

For some time previously, several hundred posters had been put up through out the area drawing attention to 'Breakthrough: operation otherwise' without actually stating what this was to be, so as to arouse curiosity. By early September, the traditional enrolment period for existing adult classes, considerable interest had been stimulated by the posters, and the programme itself could be launched.

In five days, the Breakthrough van visited six shopping centres (visits coinciding with peak shopping periods) and two bingo sessions, one at the Working Men's Club and the other in the Community Centre. Old People's Luncheon Clubs, a picket line, factory gates and several public houses (bars) were also visited. Shoppers who shied away from the decorated van, had their interest aroused by street theatre and a local pop group. Further publicity was given by local radio and press. Public reaction was warm and enthusiastic.

This publicity appears to have played an important role in arousing people's interest. Breakthrough was frequently taken to refer to a pop group. Very few people imagined it had anything to do with adult education. Yet, once contact was made, the team could give out the specially prepared leaflet, invite people to complete the questionnaire and generally engage in conversation about educational and other local issues. During the week, over 4,000 copies of the Breakthrough leaflet were distributed.

The main aim of the new strategy was to involve a much larger number of people in working with the project than had previously been possible or seen by the team as desirable. But involvement for what purposes and to test what ideas? It is against these questions that we must look at the four main strands of Breakthrough, for each of them had different, though inter-related, objectives.

The first strand

This consisted of publicity for existing adult education classes, and attention was drawn to these in the Breakthrough leaflet. Detailed prospectuses on courses arranged by the different adult education agencies in the area were available at the van. About 1,000 copies were distributed and considerable time was spent by the team in helping people to understand them.

One obvious purpose of this strand was to increase enrolments. Some 126 people (105 female, 21 male) sought advice about specific courses. Of these, 22 (17 female, 5 male) actually enrolled in courses at the Oak Park centre. While this discrepancy between intention and action may be due, in part, to low motivation, other factors such as cost, poor transport services, shift-work and lack of baby-sitting services were constantly mentioned as very real difficulties for some people. The hypothesis that a different kind of publicity will, by itself, increase participation significantly had not been demonstrated.

More important from the project's point of view was the involvement of the existing providers of Adult Education. Unless officials and voluntary workers began to make closer contacts with the non-participators, the project would be unlikely to have any lasting effects in the area. It was important not simply to increase recruitment, but also to ensure that new perceptions of existing agencies were spread. We believe this objective was achived. The mere fact of having to *explain* one's own cherished leaflet to so many people must surely make some impact on those produced next time. And the many informal discussions in the market places certainly increased awareness amongst all three main providers of the expressed wants of several hundred local people.

The second strand

A rudimentary interest matching service was provided. A large board, entitled 'What would you like to do?', was set up, and people were invited to mark their particular interest. The intention was simply to put people with similar interests and skills in touch with each other; to take responsibility for their own learning; and in the long term to enable the team to determine the resources and approaches necessary to make this possible. Approximately one hundred people participated in this venture.

Existing provision consists almost entirely of formal classes and current regulations (especially for the local authority) ensure that this will remain so. For example, the principal of the local centre is given authority to provide a certain number of 'class hours.' In its hiring policy for rooms, the local authority has normally only made these available for 'approved organizations.' It has been difficult for informal groups to find a meeting place and even quite vigourous leisure groups (a pipe band, amateur gymnasts) have not found it easy to rent available premises. We wished to demonstrate the feasibility of organizing non-formal learning and point to some of the structural changes which might be necessary if this was to grow. As the Russell Committee noted, work of this kind:

> ...may be ill-suited to the customary modes of adult education...Insistence upon regular times of meeting, the routines of enrolment and registration of attendance, minimum numbers, the charging of fees in advance (or at all), and formal class teaching will often destroy any chance of successful educational penetration into these sectors of the population. Whatever the providing body, it must be imaginative and flexible in approach...[17]

One direct result of the interest-matching service was the creation, in co-operation with the Social Services Department, of a group for one-parent families. This is now completely self-directing and serves both social and educational functions.

Approximately fifty people sought advice or support for specific projects. Requests ranged from assistance to form a pipe band and finding premises for a junior gymnastics club, to the provision of facilities for motorcycle scrambling. Small groups

of people made suggestions for courses in subjects including local history, citizens rights and hairdressing. There has been subsequent and persistent pressure on the project from individuals who were initially contacted in Breakthrough week. Another result was the stimulation of interest among people with skills to offer. Many of these have now been 'matched' with appropriate community groups.

The third strand

Breakthrough now sought to test the idea that a programme which had only the most tenuous predetermined curriculum could develop into classes which were both intellectually demanding and socially satisfying for the participants.

Two day-time discussion groups were advertised as 'A chance to talk' and 'ways of living.' The 'target group' was housewives with small children and a creche was provided for each group. (There was no adult education provision with an associated creche on the estate despite the absence of any day nurseries or nursery schools). Middle-class housewives are well known as participants in adult education,[18] but there has been little attempt to work out new approaches for working-class areas. Working class women tend to receive less initial education than men and fewer opportunities for education and training through their work. Moreover, geographic and social insolation arising from being tied to the home by lack of transport and the need to care for young children compound their disadvantage. The situation is excerbated on Leigh Park by a number of other local factors, namely : the lack of nursery place; poor public transport facilities: a naval tradition of absent husbands; the high proportion of single-parent families on the estate; the incidence of 'twilight' shift work (17.00-22.00 hours) for women in local industry; and the fact that more than half the households on the estate have no access to a car.

Two groups with fourteen students in each were established and tutored by full-time extra-mural tutors with previous experience of this kind of work. Although the groups were recruited in an unorthodox way and avoided the formalities of a registration and pre-determined syllabuses, they settled down to a pattern which is still recognizably a class in that it is

systematically extending the knowledge and understanding of the students.

Teaching methods show some similarity to those suggested by the Humanities Curriculum Project for schools.[19] Content is determined by the students themselves, while the tutor is responsible for maintaining the quality of learning and sustaining the group in its own self-discovery and the examination of ideas. Intellectually demanding work arises from the tutor's understanding of procedures rather than a pre-determined syllabus of content.

The extension to the estate of the Workers' Education Association's adult literacy project was also given support. Publicity and the local recruitment of students and tutory were carried out by the project team. Help with evaluation has also been given to the local organizer. The literacy project, after a period of financial uncertainty, has now been incorporated into the local education authority's scheme for a county-wide compaign to combat adult illiteracy, and the organizer will play a leading role in further development of the work.

This description of our involvement with a variety of local initiatives may give the impression of a somewhat ad-hoc approach to our task. But what all the initiatives have in common is that they arose out of perceptions of need arrived by local residents themselves or by professionals working on the estate. They range from information giving on a person-to-person basis, through work with voluntary groups, action groups and public meetings, to more formal courses. In none of these fields were the existing adult education services active.

A constant preoccupation of the project has been to assist independent groups arising to meet these locally expressed needs. The inital action programme demonstrated quite clearly that a limited change in approach and a relatively short period of direct contact with local people could generate a large number of possibilities for educational involvement in the area. But the lack of suitable, systematic and readily available support within the existing adult education services meant that the research fellows were burdened with an extensive action programme.

Final phase: evaluation

The project's final phase coincided with more intensive work on evaluation together with a gradual withdrawal from action. In this final phase, the original model of working closely with the three providing bodies, and giving support and help for the evaluation of experimental work jointly planned but undertaken by them, became increasingly real.

There was also the problem of ensuring that pioneer initiatives would continue to be taken even when the project had finished. Voluntary efforts still need professional support and we have been able to establish a physical base ('Focus 230') co-operatively run by local residents and staffed by two full-time workers provided by the Hampshire County Council. The base provides a focal point for a wide range of voluntary activities and agencies and is able to foster further inter-agency cooperation. It should also ensure that there is a local support system for new initiatives and development work. If local people can continue to play a major part in determining the way the base is run, then developments in adult educational provision for the area should be further accelerated.

As we have seen, much of the project's work centered around community-care and communications—action programmes which have largely originated from the initial responses of local people to the team's enquiries. Contrary to the majority of community projects both in the United Kingdom and in the United States of America, the team had a combined commitment to action and research. Whilst many teams deploy their members to either the action or research components of their programmes, the New Communities Project has attempted to focus attention on one specific field, i.e., 'adult education,' and has generated a phased withdrawal from action into research using the same team. Although this strategy has advantages in avoiding personality clashes between two factions and in balancing the relative development of action with research, other problems arise.

The nature of the project has been to present a sympathetic, low-key approach to the local residents in a nevertheless highly committed way. The team has closely identified with participants in various local action programmes. Withdrawing them-

selves from such action was a delicate process which depended greatly upon the relative independence achieved by the participants. An overhasty withdrawal could have led to a collapse of the group concerned; delayed removal of the team's commitment could bespeak an over-dependence by local group members. It could also limit the time available to the team for research. Further, the exploratory nature of the project's strategy precluded the possibility of a classical pretest and post-test research design and led to the emergence of an 'illuminatory' approach to evaluation.[20]

An attempt is being made to create a holistic final report of the project which will present a number of different facets of the work in a unified way. A schedule covering this evaluation programme was drawn up to cover the project's final year in order to ensure the maximum use of the time available for the completion of each component. The team feels strongly that any interpretation of their findings should be based upon information provided by local participants and local professional fieldworkers as well as from survey data and logs prepared by themselves.

Just as the action programmes have required a degree of orchestration by the team, so, too, the research necessitiated bringing together both objective and subjective material in a balanced way. It could be argued that the result will be a subjective report heavily biased in favour of results thought to be successful by the team. 'Illuminative' evaluation is, however, more concerned with information gathering than with the decision making, which is normally associated with objective procedures. We hope that an unbiased selection of participants' views will tend to counteract over-optimistic reporting by the team.

Data were obtained from a survey administered to all local residents currently participating in adult or further education at a number of institutions in the area. A comparison group of non-participants randomly selected from the area was included in the survey. The total adult population of the estate is 23,000 (i.e., over the age of 18) and the two sample groups total, 899 participants and 515 non-participants. A self-administered questionnaire was used by both samples and an analysis was

carried out of their responses to items such as family circumstances, employment, satisfaction with the area, participation in voluntary organizations and local affairs, leisure pursuits and personal education. These items have been presented to both samples in identical from while two independent parts of the questionnarie included items designed to test the dependent variable, 'take up or non-take of existing adult education provision.' The questionnaires were posted to all respondents but collected by a team of local volunteers in order to provide a human element in the survey, allowing respondents to seek assurance on matters of confidentiality, etc., and to provide further evidence on reasons for non-response.

A similar postal survey for part-time tutors working in local adult education centres was undertaken. Their views are essential to an accurate account of existing local provision and any future development. The questionnaire included items on operational conditions, objectives, curriculum development, recruitment of students, promotional methods and future strategies in adult education. Together with the previous survey of participants and non-participants, the responses of the part-time tutors should provide a reasonably objective picture of the situation, as it presently exists in local adult education provision.

Involving other professionals

There are other professionals who work in the area but may not regard themselves as educators. A series of semi-structured interviews were carried out by a staff member of the Adult Education Department working in conjunction with the Project team. One objective was to obtain some evidence of the impact of the project upon professionals working in educational, social and health fields. Their hopes, inhibitions, knowledge of the area's development and forecasts for the future were vital to the project's study. The continuity and development of such services will be maintained by them and not by the project. The interviews allowed the recording of some identification of the project's catalytic effect among professionals and the educative role of people working in all the helping agencies has emerged more clearly.

The notion of educational roles forming part of the work carried out by people in other disciplines was extended by the

project into training spheres. The evaluation programme followed time-consuming schedule which would have been impossible for the team to meet unaided. Post-graduate students, mainly studying for diplomas in social work and social administration, provided a valuable and indispensable service to the project. Although formal training procedures normally allied with social work placements are impossible in a project situation, it was possible to provide students with specific tasks which allowed unique scope for development as the student saw fit. The tasks also allowed considerable scope for personal development and understanding to occur simultaneously with involvement in a real and demanding piece of work.

Three studies have been completed by these students and form part of the over all evaluation programme. Each, in its way, has required the participation of the student in action as well as research. One study examines the Workers' Education Association's adult literacy programme. A series of semi-structured interviews were carried out with tutors and students. Meeting of the participants were arranged and the information obtained linked with statistical data to provide a comprehensive account of the literacy programme. This information has already been made available to the local education authority to assist in its plans of a much larger scheme for illiterates in the region.

A second study explored the needs of a number of one-parent families living on this estate. Work involved direct action by the student concerned in helping such a group to meet and organize their own activities. In addition, the student carried out a regular programme of visits as well as work with new referrals. The results have been recorded in a discursive way and should provide a guide for future work in this field which lies within the operlapping areas of social work and education.

A third study used an approach in which the student set out to obtain detailed information on housing in the area and then used exhibition techniques to attract local interest. The results provided the project with useful baseline data. Much of the action programme so far carried out by the project has been concerned with the engagement of non-participants. It was hoped that the housing study would provide a further method

of engaging a group in a particular area of interest, but so far this has not occurred.

Post-graduate students also played an important part in conducting the surveys and in helping to complete their analysis. There is no doubt that such help was useful in the transfer of the project team's emphasis from action to research. At the same time the presence of extra personnel encouraged ideas to be generated during regular or impromptu seminar sessions.

Monitoring group performance

The informal discussion groups which formed a major part of the action programme have met regularly and developed in a number of ways. The team was faced with the problems of evaluating this development. The works of Osgood and Bales[21] provide methodologies for obtaining quantitative data on group performance. If, however, a view of education is taken in which human beings are seen as potentially self-directing, then the process of evaluation becomes part of the group task. Two discussion groups centred their work around a series of topics during 1974-75. Transcriptions of group meetings show that the members felt that changes had taken place in their personal and interpersonal development.

By transcribing the results of group meetings and presenting the groups with their own transcriptions, to use as they wish, it was possible for evidence of self-direction to be recorded. The evaluation was carried out on the groups' terms and not the external evaluator's. The monitoring of the groups was made in the light of standards individual members have set and as they became aware of the extent to which that performance fulfils, exceeds or falls short of those standards.

During the latter part of 1974, a further strategy of engagement was introduced by the project. A part-time tutor of the Adult Education Department formed a group of mothers with young children to discuss family and child-rearing problems. As the group became more confident, secondary level students who were shortly to leave school, were invited to participate. A staff member of the Adult Education Department accompanied the part-time tutor during the complete process of setting up the group and home-visiting while adopting a participant-observer role in discussion sessions.

A full record of this work provided a useful addition to the information obtained from the other more established groups. The record also provided a profile of an adult educator working within social and educational parameters, and illustrated the degree of involvement required by a tutor to generate sufficient group momentum to enable the group to become self-sufficient and self-supporting.

Evaluation pattern : An overlay system

The emerging pattern of the project's evaluation programme is that of an overlay system. Each component may be superimposed on the one below to provide a composite, or 'illuminative, picture. Such a system requires a base and a framework to determine its conceptual shape. The base for the overall evaluation is contained in a collection of sociological and demographic data for the area starting with 1971 census material and including descriptions of family structure and movement, facilities, housing, health, employment, town planning, transport, education and others agencies.

The framework for this holistic view is in the form of a log prepared by the project team to determine the historical progress of their work from January 1973. There is no doubt that the action-research team has been at least as susceptible to change as other participants in the programmes, and an attempt is being made to record such changes. Events, too, have occurred during the project's life which are unique. Local government reorganization took place during the mid-point of the project's term and produced an extended period of slow movement, before and after the event, in the local authority's administrative machinery. An inflationary situation brought with its factors inhibiting public expenditure which led to reductions in local services, including education.

This project was concerned with non-participators and with strategies for providing adult education more closely related to local needs. Thus the possibility of maintaining programmes of action with clearly pre-defined results yielding only objective and quantifiable data never existed. The views of local people were centrally involved. Because of this, an anthropological approach to evaluation employing insights from a number of different sources, including subjective ones, seemed most

appropriate. The response of bodies providing education gave an indication of the preparedness to support and engage in development work. It also provided an insight into the current state of awareness of their commitment to the values embodied in the project's design for action and research. Finally, the project team learned of the problems of making provision for adult education on the estate through direct contact with the obstacles.

The Project highlights a number of characteristics of action-research. The first is its exploratory nature. Those directly involved undertake a journey from which they and others can learn. The general direction of the journey is determined, but the course ultimately taken is contingent upon a number of factors. Among these are unforseeable changes in the wider social and economic setting and the structure of the Project, and local characteristics which were unknown at the outset. A further feature of action-research is the necessary and desirable balance required between the ground base of action and the hypothetical level of research.

Some working principles : A conclusion

During the final two years of the Project, we were able to formulate a number of principles and then examine them in an operational setting. The principles are important because they may be transferable to other settings:-

1. The growth of adult education within an area should be ecological. It commences where people are and assists their intellectual, social, psychological, cultural and political growth using their environment as a basis for development.
2. It is necessary to establish a belief in the abilities, a respect for the values and a reinforcement of the potential of people, whatever their class or background might be. If this principle is applied, then it implies that learning to control, to make decisions and to rejuvenate their own world is well within their capabilities.

NOTES

[1]The authors would deny the appropriateness of the sharp administrative distinction made in the United Kingdom between vocational and non-vocational education; but the New Communities Project is largely concerned

with the latter as it was understood and considered by the Russell Committee. (See : *Adult Education : A Plan for Development*, HMSO, 1973). In England and Wales there are three main providers of non-vocational adult education : the local education authorities with 1,700,000 enrolled students in 1968/69, the university extra-mural departments with 163,000 students and the Workers' Educational Association with 150,000 students (Russell Committee, Ibid, p. 5-6).

[3]Trenaman in the 1950s concluded that : 'Socio-occupational rating is likely to be a better predictor of attitudes to education in adult life than is the age of competing full-time education.' 'Adequacy of Provision.' *Adult Education*, Vol. 42, No. 6, p. 76 1970.

[4]Ibid, p. 57 and 70.

[5]See Tom Lovett, *Adult Education, Community Development and the Working Class*, 1975; *Adult Education, Deprivation and Community Development : a critique*, Paper presented at the conference on 'Social Deprivation and Change in education,' University of York, April 1972; 'Adult Education and Social Action' in *Yearbook Association of Community Workers*, 1974.

[6]Especially work in the Educational Priority Areas (see A.H. Halsey, ed:, *Educational Priority*, Vols. 1-5, HMSO, 1972-75) and the Community Development Project of the Home Office (see Inter-Group Project Report, 1974).

[7]From the paper outlining the original research design and application for grant submitted to the Department of Education and Science.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Including disadvantage caused by personal incapacity, social deprivation and educational deprivation (Ibid, para 279).

[10]Ibid, para 278.

[11]And, it might have been added, the language and 'educated' accent of many teachers.

[12]Ibid, para 187.

[13]All figures in this section relating to population and adult education are taken for the year 1971, the year of the last official government census.

[14]The team consisted of these two, plus a full-time secretary plus some part-time support from various departments of the university and from the local education authority. The project was heavily dependent on local voluntary help.

[15]Wiltshire, H.C., 'The Concepts of Learning and Need in Adult Education', *Studies in adult Education*, Vol. 5, No. 1, April 1973.

[16]Lovett, Op. cit.

[17]A central government department.

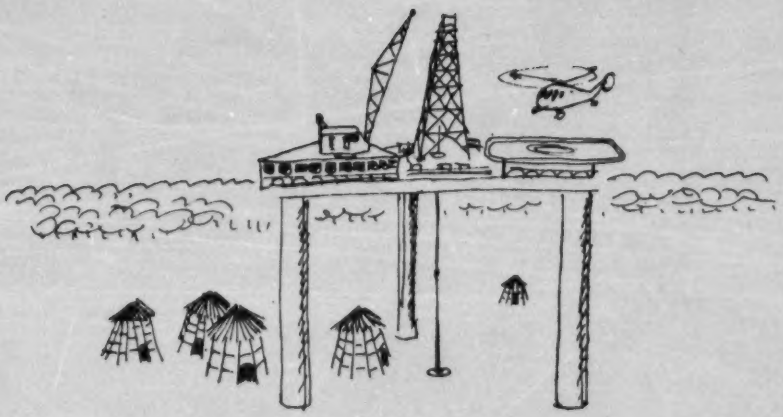
[18]Research design paper, op. cit., para. 284.

[18]The growth classes of this kind is firmly related to self-development, including the desire to make a contribution as professionals (often in social work) once children are old enough to allow this.

[19]See *the Humanities Project : an introduction*, 1970 and Fordham, P., 'The Humanities Project in an Adult Class; *Studies in Adult Education*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 1974.

[20]Parlett, M. and Hamilton, D., *Evaluation as Illumination : a new approach to the study of Innovatory Programs*, Centre for Research in the Educational Sciences, University of Edinburgh, 1972.

[21]Bales, R.F., *Interaction Process Analysis*, Cambridge, Mass : Addison-Wesley, 1951; Osgood, C.E., *The Measurement of Meaning*, Chicago : Univ. of Illinois Press, 1957.



10

Peasant Participation, Adult Education and Agrarian Reform in Chile

*Francisco Vio**

Agrarian reform in Chile was among the most comprehensive in Latin America. It affected almost 5,000 large farms, in total about 20 million acres, representing 34.2 per cent of the farming area of the country. The reform was implemented in two phases : during the reformist government of Eduardo Frei (1964-70), when around 8 million acres were expropriated; and during the left-wing government of Salvador Allende (1970-73) which incorporated 12 million more acres into the reformed sector.[1] This ambitious experiment required new policies for the allocation of resources and credits, technical assistance, the productive structures, marketing and education. It also required the transformation of the relevant government department and its service institutions. Several problems arose as a consequence of these necessary changes. This chapter is concerned with the problems of education and the land-working *Campesinos* (peasantry) who benefited from agrarian reform, and how the deficiencies were solved in Talca, a Province of Chile.

Among the objectives of education in the agrarian reform, two were salient: (a) changing the attitudes, values and norms (characteristic of the previous land tenure system) of peasants just emerging from a long period of dependency; and (b) the acquisition of knowledge and skills required by the new methods

*This chapter was written by the author especially for inclusion in this book.

of agriculture. The first objective was called 'general education' and the second 'technical education.' I maintain that the major problems confronting adult education within agrarian reforms were: (a) the absence of peasant participation in the design and implementation of the programmes; (b) the separation of general education from technical education; (c) methods of teaching that differed from the traditional learning patterns of the peasants; (d) the inadequate selection of adult educators; and (e) the inadequacy of the government departments to serve the needs of education in the reformed agrarian sector.

The role of adult education in agrarian reform

Adult education received a great impulse during the government of Frei, often being viewed as a panacea to solve most of the country's problems. The Community Development scheme (called *Promocion Popular*) was designed to break the inertia of the 'marginals' and to integrate them as active participants in society. The National Institute for Professional Training intended to transform the unskilled sectors of the working class into a labour force for the developing industrial sector. The goal was to use education, through the Agrarian Reform Corporation schemes, as a means of transforming peasants into new and efficient agricultural entrepreneurs. Every state institution had special department to help control and implement these programmes.

Behind these programmes lay a conception of adult education that exaggerated its potential as an agent for change. This thinking was influenced by the relative success of the education programmes for farmers introduced in the United States of America. These programmes were simply transferred, without special analysis, to a very different reality of Latin America. The development of adult education in this continent, especially from the 1960s, indicated that education by itself does not solve the problems of underdevelopment.

The life experiences of an adult are determined by the society in which he lives and, more particularly, by his social position within that society. Conscious programmes of education provide but a part, often marginal and tangential, of the uni-

verse of learning situations which an adult encounters. A failed harvest or an unhappy contact with the government may teach an individual more than is learned from many hours spent in the classroom. Adult education does not take place in a social vacuum. It must, therefore, take into account the social transformation and social strife which are occuring at a particular time. In the context of rural Chile during the late 1960's and early 1970's, adult education had to take into account the social position of the peasant within the overall process of agrarian transformations. The situation of the peasant had also to be considered in relationship to the general plan of national social development. To ignore these factors is to abandon realism and confer upon education a role in the process of social change which it does not possess and can not fulfil.

This explains why the outcome of education in Frei's agrarian reform was poor. After efforts to promote, through general education, more or less collective forms of land exploitation, and in spite of the great amount of resources that were invested, peasants continued to clamour for individual plots. In technical education, the lack of integration betweeen local and national development plans was obvious. For example, after their training courses, tractor drivers had no tractors to drive, and newly trained book-keepers were not subsequently appointed as such by the general assembly of peasants in their farms.

During the government of President Allende, adult education was not considered the main instrument for development. However, efforts were made to integrate it into a general plan, as we shall see below.

The problem of bureaucracy

The overemphasis on rural adult education encouraged a growth of the State apparatus. Among the twentyfour agrarian governmental institutions, including those in which the State played a dominant role, at least twelve intended to carry out adult educational plans and each set up a specific department. These departments found it difficult to coordinate with their own institutions. To the non-educational officers, their activities seemed to be theoretical and remote from the concrete produc-

tive process. Rural adult educators were consequently assigned to such tasks as solving actual or potential conflicts between social organizations and the bureaucracy. The difficulties that existed within different departments were exacerbated at the inter-institutional level because each claimed its right to educate the peasants. As each institution had its own peasant 'clientele,' there was a waste of resources and experiences. Worse, the peasants themselves were confused.

The Allende government initially created local and national committees for rural adult education in an attempt to coordinate the various agencies. Then, in 1972, the agricultural services were unified under a central authority. The unified programme of peasant organization and training, dependent on the Ministry of Agriculture, was created. Although this step integrated the different departments of rural adult education, it did not solve the problem of the role of adult education within the State policy of agrarian reform.

The problem of adult educators

Adult educators were recruited mainly among members of the urban middle class who were interested in agrarian reform for ideological or moral reasons, and among graduates of agricultural schools who were unemployed and for whom this was a good job opportunity. The first group contributed to the idealistic conception of an adult educational system by which they hoped to mobilise peasants as they assumed mutuality of motivations. These were theoretical explanations in accordance with the urban middle-class intellectual rationality. Much time and many resources were wasted; speeches with a plethora of moral, economic and ideological considerations were made to justify agrarian reforms. Meanwhile, the cultural universe of peasants, closely linked to concrete realities in which the learning process seeks specific results, was ignored.[2] The idealistic conceptions assumed that peasants knew nothing and so it was the wise adult educators who would disseminate knowledge. But the idealists ignored Freire[3], who emphasized that peasants have a lot of things to contribute to agrarian reform, and Lehmann,[4] who enumerated many such germane experiences in child.

The adult educators from agricultural schools rapidly acquired the traditional habits of bureaucracy, especially the legitimization of their own role.

During Allende's administration, an attempt was made to reverse the earlier trend to appointment of adult educators. Some peasants were placed in teaching positions, especially in regional and local schemes. In some cases, as in Talca, this injected a good measure of realism into the design of the programmes. But, on the other hand, it also meant that peasants who belonged to different trade unions or political factions from those who were appointed, mistrusted the new programmes, thus weakening the chances of success.

The problem of content and methodology

According to a study carried out by the Institute for Training and Research on Agrarian Reform, of the twelve organizations working in rural adult education, seven included in their programmes a theory of agrarian reform, seven included subjects related to trade unionism, and seven worked on general education, while only four were involved in technical education.[5] Programmes were implemented through more or less formal courses of teaching for periods between 10 and 120 hours. Generally, the sessions were given near the peasants' home. The pedagogical methodology most often consisted of an initial explanation, with the help of a blackboard, followed by an attempt to promote discussion among the participants. The limitations of oral explanations in adult education unsupported by adequate use of audio-visual resources, have often been stressed. Here I shall deal with peasant participation which followed presentations. This was intended to help the assimilation of the already presented knowledge. When these discussions actually occurred, often because of the gap between the theoretical information and the peasant reality, they focused on the attempts of the peasants to relate the theory to their concrete existence.

In the discussion on hierarchy within traditional land holdings, for instance, they asked the identity of the foremen, stewards or administrators. This was an advance over the more traditional methodology; but it still showed the inconsistency

between the two methods of education. The peasant has developed a method of informal (or incidental) learning which has allowed him, for better or worse, to acquire certain skills with which to face his day-to-day problems, especially those around his main activity: work. It seems to me, therefore, that any methodology that attempts to adapt itself to the peasant reality has to start with work as its central focus. Such a starting point may help promote the development of a new rationality to face the problems that peasants find in a society in transition.*

A methodology of this kind has to contain a general conception of the specific issues which will alter peasant behaviour. It cannot focus on a simple unidimensional transfer of skills to the peasant. Only with a general conception will it relate to social change. But for social change the conception must be holistic and not isolate particular elements. Rural adult education must not confine itself to transmitting new knowledge which can be adapted to this social vision, but must also include the practical use of elements in the daily life of the peasants.[6]

The problem of participation in adult education

Agrarian reform does not only aim at transforming the land tenure structure in relation to a particular development plan; it is also usually seen as a tool of government to widen its base of support among the peasants. To obtain such support in Latin America, it must break the domination of large landholders, particularly by peasant mobilization. Reformist governments mobilize peasants in order to break the traditional system and then enlist this mobilization within the general framework of the development plan. This was what Frei attempted to do. However, manipulation of the peasants can follow. This fact, together with the origins of the adult educators, the strength of the bureaucracy and the inefficiencies of the general approach, helps to explain the absence, in Frei's period, of any real participation in the agrarian programmes in general and in adult education in particular.

*Editors' note : A full discussion of different interpretations of work-oriented functionality in adult education is found in *The Experimental World Literacy Programme: A Critical Analysis*, Paris : Unesco, 1976.

When the government of Allende attempted to remedy this situation, the problems of the bureaucracy and the political conflict within his Popular Unity coalition hindered his attempts to increase the degree of peasant participation. It is true that the National Committee for Rural Adult Education was composed of national leaders of rural trade unions but their impact was mimimal. This meant that a set of courses was produced at national level, but regional bureaucrats were free to choose others they considered as being appropriate in their area. Hence, there existed a vertical planning structure which did not include adequate peasant participation. Such participation would have helped to relate the programmes to the realities of peasant life.

Some problems of the peasant response

At the beginning of the agrarian reform, there were difficulties in organizing peasants for adult education. Apart from their traditional reluctance towards formal education, they were concerned over loss of wages through absence. To overcome this difficulty, the Frei Government arranged for the appointment of a participant in each educational programme, elected by a general meeting at the farm, who would continue to receive his full wage. This caused some enthusiasm among the peasants because selection for courses meant an escape from the gruelling work of the farm. The appointment of a peasant to a course meant that the others had to do his work on the farm. But many appointees returned to the farms to visit their families, rather than to disseminate newly acquired knowledge. This reflects, to some extent, the low value peasants had for this kind of adult education.

When peasant participation was increased, the programme centered around technical education, particularly the organization of the reformed enterprise, agricultural accountancy, marketing, dairy production and viticulture.

At this point, it might be worthwhile to pause a minute and consider the following fact which emerged from agrarian reform in Chile. If the reform involved 300,000 peasants, how was it possible for agriculture to be re-organized without some drastic drop in production, as usually accompanies the

first year of any agrarian reform? Could the peasant education programme have led to this unusual feature?

The failures of formal adult education did not mean that the peasants' attitudes were unchanged. The actual experience of massive land expropriations, landowners' resistance, the contact that the peasants now had with the State, the resolution of the hundreds of practical problems that occur in agrarian change, the penetration of the countryside by the political parties, the influence of mass media (they reported the numerous change-related conflicts all over the country)—all these realities made an education in themselves. They also suggest some of the very many sources and methods adult education can employ.

An experience of peasant participation: The peasant school of Talca

In 1972, the Centre for Agrarian and Peasant Studies at the Catholic University of Chile launched, in the province of Talca, a programme which recognised the deficiencies just outlined and attempted to correct them through peasant participation in the design, implementation and evaluation of rural adult education projects. The word 'participation,' in Latin America as elsewhere, has been transformed into one of those words that everyone repeats and then takes for granted (i.e., ignores). As a result of this demagogy, many efforts merely wasted time and resources. While participation is used by governments as an ideological tool to expand their political base of support, in contrast, the Talca project considered participation not simply as a way to secure the success of a rural development plan but also as a method of transferring power to the peasantry.

Initial contact was made with the four provincial trade unions to invite them to make an independent effort to improve adult education within the agrarian reform process. After a lengthy discussion, some basic ideas were agreed upon:

1. Peasants have accumulated a richer experience than the so-called 'experts' and that knowledge should be shared in a system that had its link in their agriculture.
2. Adult educators should be selected from among peasants

with different experiences to be complemented by outside helpers. The unions called this programme 'the peasant school.' They knew that it had to gain credence with the peasantry, which was facilitated by the association of the scheme with the University, rather than a government department. Furthermore, the provincial leaders could not afford a failure that would further alienate a peasant training, thus risking their popularity. Consequently then took a cautious step, even though they wanted adult education to have massive coverage, and selected twelve farms for the programme in the first year. In the following year, the remaining 168 farms, comprising the reformed agrarian sector of Talca, would be invited to participate. The twelve farms would be selected from spontaneous applicants.

3. Finally, a basic structure was decided upon: there would be a Provincial Commission composed of two delegates from each trade union, plus two delegates from the University without the right to vote. They were to formulate a specific proposal acceptable to all the trade unions. Similar committees would be set set up in each of the selected farms.

The incorporation of trade union leaders had some advantages. All of them actually lived on farms and so they had intimate knowledge of the base level, in particular the demands and complaints of the peasants at the grass roots. In that sense, they represented peasant interest better than national leaders. Furthermore, the experience that they gained in contact with other leaders, officials, the urban sector, etc., often gave them a broad perspective.

The University believed that the participation of provincial unions would have at least three consequences:

1. Adult education would begin to lose its 'academicism' and would be set in a simpler and more accessible form.

2. The usual 'promotion' of the programme would be unnecessary because the leaders knew the peasants' aspirations.

3. General education would have a more precise meaning because the leaders would relate the realities of the communities to the general transformation of society through its different stages: the farm's community, the nearest village, the province and the country. (One said that he was the only one from his

farm that had visited the capital, Santiago, and that it was difficult therefore for the peasants to conceive of the 'Nation').

Union participation at provincial level had some disadvantages: the project was seen by provincial leaders as a way of legitimizing their leadership of the unions and that led them to try to centralize decisions in their own hands at the expense of their communities. As a result, some problems developed between the farm committees and individual provincial leaders. Yet, as a whole, their participation simplified the project and gave it a more precise framework.

The provincial Commission proposed two general objectives that could be specified in each farm according to their circumstances:

1. To increase production. Not only did the country and the peasants need more food but the efficiency of peasant enterprises was a useful weapon in the struggle between peasants and landowners. The unions wanted to prove that the peasants could produce more than the expropriated landowners had done. For that purpose, the unions were promoting a "collective" as the form of internal organisation in the reformed farms for political and economic reasons. However, the Unions' approach was cautious because they were aware of a degree of peasant resistance to collective work.

2. To increase the degree of union organization, i.e., to consolidate the peasant movement as a whole.

Around these two aims, technical and general education would be brought together in relation to peasants' productive work.

The Commission decided to focus the methodology and content of the programme around the Annual Production Plan. This plan had to contain production targets; description of the seeding in each field; the amount of labour, seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, machinery and cash that would be needed, and a specific calendar of ploughing, seeding, harvesting and marketing. Each reformed farm had to produce such a plan at the beginning of the agricultural year and present it for approval to the government, which then guaranteed aid for the farm from the agrarian services.

The Commission's idea was to discuss seeding when peasants

were actually sowing, and water supply when they were involved with irrigation. The methodology was to analyse the present systems and to suggest methods for improvement. General education would be part of these discussions by linking specific problems to more general issues. For example, in the discussion on irrigation, a possible question might be: if there is insufficient water is it because there has been a drought or is some individual hoarding it? If so, who are the people who can privately appropriate the water? Why are they protected by the law? Who makes the law?

The Provincial Commission, in the light of the production plans, worked out a scheme of several stages: (a) Planning; (b) Seeding; (c) Irrigation; (d) Harvesting; (e) Marketing; and (f) Evaluation. Planning, or preparation of the production plan, was considered most important because it gave the peasants the opportunity to study their own community (the distribution of land, the available capital and skills, their organization of the productive process, their relation with the outside world through the selling of the produce, etc.). It was hoped that they would evaluate their own system of working the land and so open the door for innovation. For example, a decision on seeding required a discussion not only of the benefits of former crops but also of the purpose of land cultivation, the village's and province's and country's needs, the role and status of peasants in society, who would make a profit on the produce, and so on,

On each farm, as I have stated, local committees would be set up comprising of three peasants appointed by the general meeting and one agronomist from the University. They would specify the programme at the farm level, deal with its implementation and prepare the final evaluation to be approved by the assembly and by the Provincial Commission. Thanks to the interdisciplinary character of the Centre for Agrarian and Peasant Studies, the agronomists not only had experience in dealing with peasants but also were able to encourage a discussion on the links between technical issues and general education.

The twelve farms taking part in the programme were located in different municipalities and each had a different experience. For brevity's sake, I have selected one to show how the project was implemented at the grassroots level. Then I shall present

some comments on the final provincial evaluation of the plan as a whole.

The Huilquilemu case

This farm has been chosen because it is an average enterprise in terms of the size, type and number of peasants, the types of corps and problems that it faced. Perhaps its main difference from others is its leadership.

General characteristics

Huilquilemu is a farm located twelve kilometres from the main provincial town Talca. It had an area of ninety six hectares and at the time of the project, 28 peasants belonged to it. It mainly produced cash crops (potatoes, sugar-beet, grapes, vegetables) but also raised some cattle. Before its expropriation in 1971, each peasant worked on the farm in exchange for a wage, a house, the use of a half-hectare plot of land and the right to pasture one cow. After expropriation, they maintained the same basic organization of production, but increased the individual plots to one hectare, the remainder being cultivated collectively. Because they had struggled for expropriation since 1965, they had organized a Union Committee and thus acquired a reasonable level of internal cohesion that had allowed them to perform some common activities. However, during the first agricultural year after expropriation, collective farm production dropped to such an extent that they were unable to pay their debts to the State Bank. Meanwhile, individual members improved their standards of living. The leadership—a Chairman, a Secretary and a Treasurer—attributed this outcome to the fact that peasants tended to work more on their individual plots than on the collective farm. Individuals had participated in the programme because they wanted to improve production on their own plot of land, rather than apply what they had learnt to collective farming.

Team and specific objectives

A general meeting of the peasants appointed three members as the Local Committee: the Chairman, a man who had some

urban experience because he had worked for two years in town, and two literate peasants who had attended the primary school for four and three years respectively. The Provincial Commission appointed an agronomist from the University staff.

The committee worked out a proposal that included two objectives: (a) a discussion on the internal organization of production and, in particular, the problem of collective work compared to individual plots; and (b) a collation of the available methods that would improve the use of their productive resources other than land (that is machinery, fertilisers, pesticides, labour, etc.). The assembly approved these objectives and introduced another, in fact an extension of the second: a debate on the ways to reduce the amount of credit that they were forced to seek from the bank.

Although it was clear to the peasants that this was a programme of adult education, much emphasis was placed on the idea that it was an integrated project with specific tasks to implement and not by any means another theoretical exercise.

Development of the project

What follows is a description of the different stages by which the programme was implemented on this farm, emphasizing how the links between practical problems and more theoretical issues were established, especially during the first stage.

1. Planning the agricultural year

The Local Committe decided to divide the stage in two separate steps: what they called 'to know what we have,' and the discussion of and decision in 'what to do.'

For the peasants, the idea of carrying out preliminary research was considered unnecessary until the agronomist began to ask for specific data on available skills, level of primary education, number of tools, and so on. The answers were so vague that it was decided to ask each peasant individually. A simple questionnaire was prepared by the University staff to gather information on the individual plots and the collective sector. The questions on the individual sector included: the size of family; skills, working experience and level of education of all the family members: types of crops;

production; labour input; tools, machinery and cattle at their disposal; and what farm resources were used in the individual plots. On the collective sector, questions included; types of crops; labour requirements; labour available; an inventory of resources (machinery, tools, horses, etc.); distribution of labour; and to whom the produce was sold in the last year and at what price. The questionnaires were used by the three members of the Committee who interviewed the twentyeight members of the farm. In three days, the task was completed. The results were tabulated together with a map of the farm in which individual and collective parts were marked. These were presented to the general assembly as a way of introducing the debate on what to do.

The tabulation showed that certain skills were hired from outside, for example the blacksmith when, in fact, there was a blacksmith available at the farm. The data showed that individual plots occupied 28 hectares which, with the land occupied by the houses and the pasture, totalled 38 hectares. This meant that nearly a third of the total arable land was under private cultivation. The data also showed that the one hectare of collective land was producing more than one hectare of individual land, in monetary terms. This was a result of the price of grapes, sugar-beet and potatoes, crops that were not amenable to small scale production. Hence, it was concluded that if the farm wanted to improve its income, it had to increase the land available for collective work and reduce the size of individual plots.

Fifteen members were against collectivization because they believed that the laziest would benefit from the extra work of the others. The Chairman was in favour of collectivization for political reasons. He was a fervent supporter of socialist policies and so he emphasized, in his own words, the peasants' responsibilities to supply an expanding market according to the income redistribution policy of President Allende's government. If there is food scarcity in the towns, he said, the landowners would make use of the discontent to try to overthrow the government. However, the assembly appeared to have a lower level of political consciousness and preferred to discuss the matter from a more concrete point

of view. This shows that, while in urban areas ideological discussion was the order of the day, in rural areas, peasants had a different approch to particular issues. Before deciding, it was proposed to invite the Chairman of a farm in a nearby town who had organized collectivization to a general meeting. He explained that they had solved the problem of the lazy individuals through a simple system of economic incentives. The system was studied and finally agreed by everyone that it should be implemented during the next year. Individual plots were reduced to a garden plot of quarter hectare and the remainder were cultivated collectively.

This experience raises a number of questions related to the potential capabilities of peasants in transition, to their proleterization and their acceptance of collectivization. It is to be stressed that peasants participated in a detailed analysis of their reality and that through that process of research they changed.

When it was decided what to produce and where, the question of the requirements of production was raised. A table showed the resources available. The committee prepared another on the still-lacking requirements. The comparison showed that there was a lack of pesticides, fertilizers and cash. As pesticides and fertilizers were considered expensive, the assembly decided to invite a representative of the State Bank, which sold these articles, to discuss their price at a general meeting. In that discussion, the peasants were told that there was an established monopoly on the import of these materials and the government was trying to break it through the centralized buying. This point was used by the Chairman as a clear demonstration of how the State operated prior to Allende and how things were now changing in favour of the peasants. Although they had to buy the fertilizers at the high prices, the debate was helpful as it opened the minds of the peasants to a wider reality, a process reinforced when credits were discussed.

So the planning stage—three weeks of intensive debate—ended with some important results: (a) the decision to expand collective sector; (b) an effort to maximize the use of the productive resources; and (c) the community was learning how

to plan its future in a democratic way, taking into account internal and external forces.

2. Seeding, irrigating and harvesting

In these stages, emphasis was placed on technical issues, so I felt it necessary, for the purposes of this chapter, to present some of the questions that were raised linking technical and general education.

Seeding: Who produces seeds? Visit to a seed producer's farm. How is the price fixed? Are peasants able to produce their own seeds? The problem of technological control.

Irrigation: Why is there a shortage of water? How is the scarce water distributed? Why is water privately appropriated? What redress, if any, exists in law? Visit of a lawyer to the farm. Who makes the law?

Harvesting: The problems caused by harvesting because of its labour-intensive character.

3. Marketing

At marketing time, a picture was shown to the peasants which described the government's policy to expand the demand for food while at the same time controlling food prices. This policy was then related to the growth of the black market in food, which paid better prices. The response of the peasants was evaluated in terms of the degree of increased consciousness related to the project.

At that time, the unified socio-political opposition had launched a frontal political attack on the government directed at its overthrow. This conflict received wide coverage in the media. When the Chairman proposed that they sell the produce to government agencies in order 'to help feed the urban poor instead of filling the pockets of the rich,' he found a favourable response. It was difficult, however, to establish whether the peasants accepted a lower price as a direct result of the programme or because of the sharpening class conflict in the wider society. Probably, both factors led them to take a decision that neo-classical and monetary economists would see as rare, if not unthinkable.

4. Results

Collective production increased and the debts were duly paid. But the question remained whether the peasants produced enough in the collective sector to compensate for the loss of their individual plots. Twenty of them agreed that they produced more than before. The remaining eight, probably the harder working ones, declared that they had received less in spite of the economic incentives, and so they turned against collectivization. This conflict was present until the end of the programme. Thus the project produced an increase in collective production but also introduced a source of conflict with in the farm. As a whole, the peasants considered the programme a success and they celebrated it with a most enjoyable party.

Provincial evaluation

The Provincial Commission met with all the farm committees, trade union leaders and university staff to make a final evaluation.

1. Production as a whole increased in the twelve farms because of more efficient resources and the expansion of collective work. A fall in wheat production was due to a lack of adequate fertilizer. Unfortunately, the State Bank was unable to provide it at the necessary time.
2. Peasants accepted the increased area for collective cultivation because they saw it as a method of increasing production and productivity rather than as an ideological link with Socialist policies.
3. Although it was agreed that the general direction of the project was correct, some farms came to the conclusion that the project encouraged unplanned participation and so they demanded more careful planning.
4. A decision was made to invite other reformed farms to participate in the project for the following agricultural year. However, this decision was not implemented because of the right-wing military coup d'etat in September 1973.

The military took over the running of the University; the Peasant School was considered subversive and it was, therefore,

abolished; the Centre dissolved, its documents burnt and most of its members arrested. Most of the reformed lands, including Huiquilemu, were given back to their former owners and some of the provincial leaders were sent to concentration camps. As stated at the International Conference on Adult Education, held in 1976 in Dar-es-Salaam, education of adults can indeed be a dangerous thing not only for the Establishment but also for the adult educators !

Some conclusions

1. Adult education in rural areas must be conceived as a part of a more comprehensive change taking place within the social and agrarian context. Any attempt to attach value to it independently of the entire cluster of variables that affect peasant behaviour is a waste of human resources. Such an attempt also contributes to a loss of credibility and a lack of acceptance of adult education as a tool in the process of change.

2. Adult education must be an integral and operational part of a general and comprehensive process of change. But it must also be a very specific plan of action prepared to fulfil the needs generated by education itself, especially technical education. It is imperative that an effective co-ordinating body relate rural adult education to agricultural development.

3. Co-ordination is necessary if educational programmes are to be centered around the problems faced by peasants in their daily life. Technical assistance should include educational content that can be used for general educational purposes.

4. Adult education should be a lifelong and continuous process. Although this may sound Utopian when there is a lack of resources, the experience of Talca suggests that new methodologies and techniques can (and should) be developed to meet this goal.

5. The core of the general education process in the countryside should be centered on the farm and on the work performed by the peasant.

6. Participatory research can be a developmental tool to help communities to self-knowledge and to act consciously in their transformation as a result.

7. Any methodology that is based on this assumption should consider the remarks of Paulo Freire before he left Chile: 'Peasants have a lot to teach. It is not through a vertical relationship between the teacher and the student that the solutions for the learning of adults in rural areas can be found, but through a dialectical relationship between two people who bring different elements to a situation in order to face the same reality'.

8. Within this context, adult educators should be selected from people with rural backgrounds and experiences. If this is not possible, then emphasis should be placed upon training those who will work in the rural sector through a period of participatory life among the peasants.

9. Underlying all these conclusions, it is assumed that the highest possible degree of peasant participation in the design, implementation and evulation of adult education programmes takes place.

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11

One Step Forward : A Community Project in Northern Canada

*James A. Draper**

Background

Approved by four Tribal communities, the Community Education Project was meant to obtain "funds to generate a practical set of strategies for involving and achieving quality education for the Tribal people of the communities." Four components were envisaged : (a) in-service training programmes for teachers, administrators, school-community committees and social administrators; (b) a mobile resource centre for Tribal education; (c) a community needs assessment study as a 'base for identification of community priorities in education and for the development of programmes to meet these priorities'; and (d) 'systematic programmes of social animation within the four communities' to give Tribal people 'an effective voice in determining their educational system' by developing 'community school.'

The proposal was submitted directly to a government ministry. The ministry agreed to fund the third and part of the fourth components of the proposal. But government support was on condition that a reputable research agency, namely a university, would administer the project funds, supply the principal investigator for the project, and ultimately be responsible for the study. Disappointed that it could not receive funds directly, the Tribal group eventually agreed that the principal investigator be a university professor with whom they had

*This chapter was prepared especially for publication in this volume.

previously worked and whom they trusted. In turn, it was agreed that the university would contract with the Tribal group to collect most of the data for the study. A feeling of continuing mutual trust led to the contract between the university and the Tribal people. As will become apparent, the Tribal people frequently differed in their interpretations of the intentions of the contract, methodologies for conducting the project and leadership and initiative roles.

To a great extent, the contractual relationships really meant that all parties lost control. For instance, the principal investigator desired and attempted to perpetuate an informal and consultative relationship. He fully realized that, although legally responsible, he could not force people to produce data or act on issues if they did not wish to do so. This was particularly true since those responsible for collecting data included six persons hired and controlled by the Tribal group. Sixty-four per cent of the total project budget was in local hands.

The dilemma can be expressed as follows : when proposals for a project are written for *one* group (the people who have expressed the initial concerns), by a *second* group (the people with the proposal writing expertise), and when the project is tied to a *third* group (the people with the funding resources), what can the people who initially wished the project reasonably hope to achieve?

The Definition of research

One of the obstacles to this project was the different perceptions about research that were held by the parties associated with it. Government authorities perceived research in traditional and quantifiable terms, and therefore would only release funds to a research institution. The Tribal group was quite capable of undertaking a community needs assessment study although they would not refer to it as research. But the term 'research' was referred to in the contracts. Such a term held negative connotations for the Tribal people. They perceived it as an academic exercise intended to serve academic institutions. The conduct of research did not seem to them to serve the needs of the four Tribal communities. Considerable time and energy was spent in identifying an appropriate research methodology.

The traditional model of research is characterized by the formation of hypotheses, or at least specific questions which are to guide the research, rigourous approaches to developing, pre-testing and using the data collection instruments, and the treatment and interpreting of data, frequently in the light of pre-established theories. In the Community Education Project, a crucial additional element was people's involvement in designing, conducting, analysing and reporting stages. The benefits were two fold. One was the learning that arose from conducting the project, e.g., how to define a problem and possible solutions to it, how to plan a study, how to collect information, how to develop concerted plans of action and learning to work together. The second benefit was the actual result of the project in terms of improving education for Tribal people. In a phrase, this was participatory and action oriented research.

Summary of methods used to collect basic data

In line with this novel, participatory approach, data collection methods had to be evolved in conformity with local expectations and conditions. The methods included:

Records : Records of Tribal councils, schools and government were consulted.

Personal experience : Since the collectors were field workers from each of the communities, a lot of valuable data for the project came from their own experience, knowledge and observation.

Workshops : Community workshops were held in each of the four communities on a fairly regular basis with the following functions: identification of issues, consideration of alternative solutions for dealing with these issues and the development of plans for action.

Interviews : A more traditional method, the interview schedule, was used with teachers by one field worker. A variation of this method was informal conversations with elders about their philosophy of education. These took place in the native language and were tape recorded and later translated into English.

Participation in actions : Participant observation was also

used as a way of collecting some data. Field workers participated in regular activities of their own community in which educational issues were being discussed. Its unique feature was that the field worker was affected by the very problem being dealt with, whether as a parent, as a school drop-out, or recent graduate.

Other studies : Some data for this project were taken from other studies and literature on educational issues relating to Tribal people.

Two methods of data collection were tried and discarded after pre-testing: interview schedules for adults and students; and field diaries of the field workers. The Tribal people felt these were inappropriate for them and for the project.

Phasing and sequencing of the project

Initially, the Tribal group and the principal investigator agreed to the following phasing: (a) identification of educational and community problems; (b) identification, for each problem, of alternative solutions; (c) weighing of short term and long term consequences for each alternative; (d) selection of one alternative for each problem; and (e) action.

About mid-way through the project, at one of the meetings attended by the Tribal group and the principal investigator, this sequence was recorded in an effort to give earlier and thus greater stress to action.

The new design was as follows:

(*a*) *Identification of general problems and needs*
(*b*) *Selecting the most immediate issues*
(*c*) *Acting and organizing*
(*d*) *Reflection and identifying new alternatives*

The Tribal people now actually worked to solve one or more problems. In two communities, members of education committees met with a school board about problems in their integrated schools; in a third, meetings were held between the Tribal Day School officials and parents; in a fourth, which was characterized by a singular lack of activities dealing with

educational issues, teacher interviews and gatherings of people began action on problems.

Each group involved in action on a problem held workshops to reflect on the work it had done and evaluate its progress toward original goals, to consider alternative approaches and plan new actions or proposals for new funding.

Although it may not be obvious, this re-orientation of the project was crucial to its continuation. The principal investigator had assumed that the Tribal people were completely in agreement with the initial sequence. In fact, this was not so. By redefining the project's phasing, the Tribals felt that they gave the project greater relevance to their interests. The initial approach was traditional: hypothesizing outcomes of action before actually getting into action. The second approach made much more sense to people who are oppressed and impatient for change. They acted earlier in the sequence, and only after acting reflected on the experience and, as a consequence, redefined action.

Broadening the context

Rephasing the project enabled all concerned to situate educational issues in a broader context. Education had not been a pressing issue for Tribal parents. Troubled by impure water, inadequate roads, no electricity, unemployment and hence the daily struggle to survive, parents saw education as a far-off affair, not immediately acknowledged as causing tension in the home. Spokesman for the Tribal communities tried to communicate to boards of education, to the university and to government that education *per se* is not always high on the list of the communities' priorities, in comparison with issues such as housing, welfare and bureaucratic practices.

Through the project, however, communities came to see that educational issues are linked to and can be as important as broader community problems. This link is evident in the following list of educational isssues identified and acted upon by different communities. The list is illustrative, not exhaustive.

One Tribal community identified such concerns as: Tribal studies taught by people who are not knowledgeable about the subject; relevancy of course content not decided by Tribal parents; destitute students who do not see their parents; high

school courses which are not designed to meet future employment needs of students; and agencies not working together.

Another community identified the following problems, among others: the need for adult up-grading programmes; and the need for a hot-lunch programme for Tribal students. A third looked at such things as the control of the budget allocation for educational programmes, and control and administration of education employees.

The diversity of approaches undertaken by the participating Tribal communities can be illustrated as follows:

One community formed as local education curriculum committee and took part more frequently in a similar committee of the local school board with the aim of broadening its outlook.

A second Tribal community prepared a report to demonstrate the kind of information that could be prepared to meet the need that 'the teacher must be aware of the background of those whom he or she serves, that is, the child, his family and his community.' The preface stated:

> "It is important to the people of this community that their children are not programmed into believing they are inferior beings. They want their children to know themselves thoroughly, to understand and appreciate their Tribal heritage, and to be able to make a choice within their own society or outside it...."

In a third community, the activity was to set up and operate a day school. This community viewed control of education as a first step towards local self-government.

Results and a look to the future

It is important to remember that, although the over-all theme of activity related in some way to education, this was not nearly so important as the fact that the Tribal people were beginning to act to solve problems that affected them. In a sense, one could argue that it did not really make much difference where they began. The result was the learning of skills necessary for organizing themselves and working together; communicating with one another and outsiders; making their con-

cerns known to bureaucrats who had the power; and beginning somehow to realign the balance of power.

For any group to look at itself constructively and critically, and see itself as the main hope for solutions, takes, one observer said, 'courage and self-confidence and indicates realism, maturity and determination which can only lead to self-development and societal development.' The 'Tribal problem' is in reality a non-Tribal one and therefore becomes the concern of Tribals and non-Tribals alike. The matter of solutions is something different. They must be identified by Tribal people themselves. The solutions do not come by throwing the problems back to school boards, government, or other sectors of the establishment.

The final report of this project gives evidence that the Tribal people are able and willing to take responsibility for recording and improving their lives. Meeting their demands and implementing their recommendations require the relinquishing of power by those that now have it. To have this happen requires, in turn, that responsible relationships develop on a basis of equality. Such are the aspirations expressed by the Tribal people.

Consequently, the basic need is for Tribal people to come to grips with the problems themselves by designing programmes that will lead to the eventual control of Tribal education.

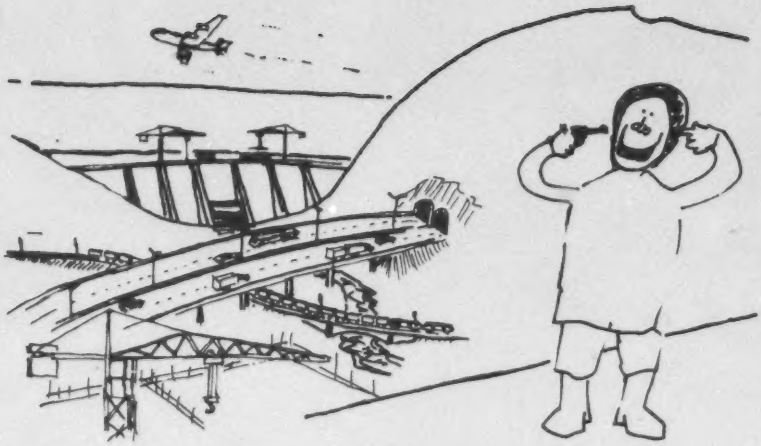
Invariably, project reports like this conclude by re-iterating the long list of obvious Tribal problems, followed by what 'the other party' non-Tribal people must do about them. A unique feature of this project is that, realizing that only they can deal with their problems, the resolutions in the final project report were aimed at what Tribal people must do and not only about education, for education is viewed as an integral aspect of total community growth.

Some concluding comments

'Research,' and more specifically 'social science research,' tends to be rigidly defined. In fact, it may have been because of this tendency that an additional party, namely a university, was brought into this project by the funding agency. Had the funding agency viewed research in more flexible terms, the Tribal group might have been able to receive funds directly from the

funding agency rather than having to contract a third party. Experience showed that the Tribal people were capable of conceptualizing and conducting a project of this kind, and of utilizing resources from outside when they thought appropriate.

Much remains to be learned about involving Tribal people in assessing their communities, in setting priorities according to their own value systems, and in problem solving. Flexibility of design, personal relationships of trust, and reflection on collective experiences can greatly enhance the growth of communities and those within them. Learning to provide for popular involvement in these ways is one step forward to bringing about community improvement and self-improvement.



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Agricultural Farm Workers' Union in India

*Kalpana Tandon and Kawaljit Singh**

Introduction

The union worked with agricultural labourers in the Rampur block in the outskirts of a large metropolitan city. The farm owners belong to the urban elite. The owners had purchased the farms largely for speculative purposes, and commercial viability was never a concern for most of the owners. Some used the farm as weekend resorts, others used them for showing agricultural income, which in India is tax free. Very few owners resided on the farms. Commercial agriculture was almost non-existent. Only a few farms were used for horticulture and poultry. The owners thus had a distant relation with the workers. Interaction of any kind was extremely limited. The owners had little, if any, interest in the functioning and prosperity of the farm or in the working conditions of the labourers. With the farms being neglected, it is easy to imagine the neglect of the workers.

The workers largely comprised of migrants from a neighbouring state. Among the workers any stable employment was considered extremely fortunate. Majority of the migrants had to look for work on a day-to-day basis, and to look for shelter with farm workers. The type of work available was construction and occasional work on the farms. The wages received by the workers were usually below the minimum level laid down by the law.[1] The payment of wages was also delayed inordinately in many cases.

*This chapter was specially written for this book.

[1]In India minimum wages are governed by the Minimum Wages Act, 1947.

The conditions at the farms varied. At some farms, the wages were above the legal minimum. At some others, they were not even half of it. Similarly, at some farms, the workers could get an income in kind from the produce with their employer's approval; at others, this was not available. It needs to be understood that the legal minimum wages are themselves grossly insufficient for minimum food, clothing and shelter requirements. Most of the farm workers had a shelter at the farm with electricity and water (because the farms were largely irrigated by tubewells) although a room of 10′ x 12′ had to be shared with quite a few others in many cases. The farm owners treated the workers as their vassals. The sense of personal loyalty was manifested by quite a number of workers as well. Employers showed total disregard for making explicit service conditions, working hours, etc. There was a complete absence of records of any kind. No appointment letters were given to the workers, no records were maintained for payment of salary, work done, duty hours etc. This is important as in the absence of any records it becomes extremely difficult to utilise the labour law implementation machinery. The employer is in a position where he can deny the existence of the employer-employee relationship itself. Although unionization is a legal right of the workers, a majority was kept under the threat of dismissal by the employers if they ever went to the union. Weekly days off were unheard of. In an ad-hoc manner, the employers would extend loans at times of need to perpetuate the relationship.

From the workers side, the army of unemployed brethren was a constant threat against militancy and assertion. Further, the villages from where the workers had migrated, had little to offer and the security of a shelter and a paltry monthly wage appeared to be a great improvement.

Many of the workers had left their families behind, social customs were thus less rigid. Women were exchanged with great ease. Drinking was common and the people were more open to outsiders as opposed to those commonly encountered in villages. Among themselves, there were a few strict dividing and uniting lines. Cooking was a very personal activity and it was not uncommon to have as many *chulhas* (cooking places) as the number of family units. But occasions such as death quickly

brought people together. Adhoc Panchayats (third party conciliation) were used to solve disputes, and decisions were mostly abided by. However, there was keen and open competition for jobs and some amount of open hostiiity. Entertainment was derived from folk as well as modern media and from participation in the folk arts. *Kirtans* and *Nautankis* (religious singing and folk theatre) were frequent and so was the custom of feeding the entire community on the slightest pretext to augment self-prestige.

The workers were largely illiterate. Their contact with local villagers was marginal and to a certain extent hostile because of their cultural and caste differences and because of competition for potential jobs. Not long ago, the local villagers had sold their land to the rich city dwellers. Obviously, the employers preferred the migrants who had little influence and were emotionally distant from the land as compared to locals who could get support nearby and had not so long ago owned the land and could stake claim on it. This increased the feelings of hostility.

The area had little organised industry. Other prevalent wage labour was found in brick kilns and stone quarries. Stone quarries as well as some small unregistered factories were also ununionised. Brick kiln workers were unionisedbut the question of who the union was benefitting could not be answered easily and the gains from unionisation were dubious, at best. Farm workers, so scattered and so few in number, had failed to attract any traditional trade unionists until the AFWU was formed.

History of the union

The Agricultural Farm Workers' Union was registered in February 1973. The union was formed to look after the interests of farm workers employed in the area described above. The initiative to organise came from a few outside activists. The outside activists themselves did not form a coherent group. They had differences of approach as well as means. Later, some of the activists left this area and started work elsewhere. The workers also had no earlier experience of unionisation. In the initial phase, the union, however, developed rapidly and the

membership became quite substantial. Struggle was taken up on common as well as individual causes, with varying degrees of success. As a response to unionisation the employers also banded themselves into an association. This process of unionisation and struggle received a serious setback with the declaration of internal emergency in India. One of the outside activists was jailed and the inside activists were beaten up and subjected to threats. Communications were distorted and problems were magnified in people's perceptions. All this had a very negative impact on the workers. As a result, the response to reactivating the union, after the emergency was lifted, was not heartening, due to fear of repression. There were also some rumours of corruption among the old union office-bearers. The officebearers themselves showed a lot of disinterest. The task of reactivating the union was taken up by the activist who had been jailed.

The union had been organised around a Central Committee with *Tolis* (groups) operating in sub-areas. The Central Committee disintegrated. Most of the established inside leaders were now dissatisfied with the outside activist who had actively involved in bringing foreign journalists on the scene who made films on the area. The insiders perceived this as corrupt behaviour. The registration of the union had also been cancelled on account of non-submission of returns to the registrar of Trade Unions. Thus the union work had to begin afresh, with only memories of the old union, some pleasant but mostly unpleasant, as a legacy.

The outside activist who remained was also unable to work for the union with the single-minded devotion as before. Some reinforcements started arriving in the form of other outside activists by February, 1979.

The Movement

The new activists were inexperienced at organising and unionising. They had upper-middle class backgrounds and were highly educated. Their motivation to engage in this activity arose only from their ideological beliefs and sense of values and not from personal problems. Only three of them in addition to the old outsider took this on as a full time activity through a voluntary agency which provided them with financial support.

The remaining three continued with their occupations and took up this work as additional activity. To begin with, most of them committed themselves for a year and wanted to review their involvement at the end of this period. They were mainly guided by the objective of making people independent, in better control of their lives and better prepared to deal with problems. The union was to be a vehicle to achieve this. In turn, they strived to build a union based on participation. They did not want to start off using traditional forms of union membership through membership dues alone. Membership to them meant active participation of people in planning and executing. In lots of ways, the limited experience of the pre-emergency period formed a basis for the attitudes of the outside activists. This was only to be expected since only one of the outsiders had any prior experience and that too only in Rampur. For example, in the past the union had functioned without resorting to the use of government labour machinery. When the work started afresh without adequate reflection on its consequences, a rigid stand was taken with regard to the labour courts. The activists considered the labour courts useful only to the employers. These views were freely propagated among the workers. Similarly, literacy classes were started at once, the need for which had been voiced during the earlier phase.

As a first step, the union work began with the revival of the weekly *tolis* (group meetings). Since the workers were mostly migrants, there were only a few left from the old days. Accordingly, the meetings concentrated on making the workers aware of the union and advantages of unionisation. The workers were inexperienced but were not totally new to the idea of having a union. As opposed to the activists, they found meaning in symbols such as *Chanda* (dues collection), pamphlets (though most could not read), etc. While the outsiders were very zealous and regular in their attempts, there was little enthusiasm among the workers.

Given this response, the outsiders felt that the union was too weak and did not take up concrete issues. The discussions on unity, struggle, wages, working conditions etc. became mere rhetoric after a little time. The process of unionization did not gather any momentum. New people kept coming to the meet-

ings and old ones kept dropping out. There were a few die-hards who had been around in the pre-emergency period who persisted along with the outsiders in making attempts.

This state of affairs continued till July 1979. At this time, the first case was taken up and fought with partial success. After this people started bringing their cases to the *tolis* more frequently. Taking up of cases in itself engendered enthusiasm in the people who started attending meetings more regularly. These cases mostly concerned individuals. No general issues were taken up. There was an informal understanding that cases of only those workers who had been coming to the *toli* meetings regularly would be taken up. This was not followed always in practice. Most of the workers approached the union only when they were in serious trouble. Many of them came to the union after losing their jobs. There were only two cases where the workers took the initiative and demanded improvement in working conditions from the employers.

The cases were first discussed in the *tolis* where it was decided whether the union should in fact take them up or not. Once the union decided to take them up, action planning was also done in the *tolis*. The outsiders had a significant role in these decisions. They were the ones who were more aware of the environment. Attempts at seeking consensus were made. As it turned out, in practice, the stand against labour courts had to be changed. At times, the employers pre-empted the union and were willing to deal with it only through the court. At other times, the union was forced to resort to the use of government labour machinery due to the lack of any other effective measures. This, however, was resented to by the concerned workers as they perceived this to be a situation where the union was leaving them at the mercy of the courts which at any rate were useful only for the employers.

On individual issues, the other forms of struggle were also limited. This was due to the specific conditions of physical remoteness of the employers, their lack of interest in productivity of the farms and also the limited strength of the union. In those cases where the employers lived in city, it was possible to stage demonstrations. But here the limitations of the union came into operation. Not many workers were in the position

to make a trip to the city to demonstrate for the cause of individuals. Particularly for those who worked on daily wages, it meant not only the expenses of the trip but also loss of the day's wages. Workers who had regular jobs were also to go only if they could entrust the farm to others. Some cases are described below:

Case study no. 1

This was the first case taken up by the union after a month long hesitation on account of the low strength. It concerned a dismissed farm worker, Shiv Lal, who had worked on the farm for eight years single-handedly. The reason for his dismissal was delay, on his part, of fifteen days in resuming duty after being on leave because he had been ill. Before going to his village, he had kept a substitute worker whose wages had also not been paid by the employer. Upon his return, Shiv Lal found that his quarters had been locked, his substitute had been asked to leave and a new worker had been hired in his place. In addition, Shiv Lal had not received his wages of Rs. 200 p.m. for 5 months.

The union wrote to the employer asking him to settle Shiv Lal's dues and pay him wages in lieu of the termination notice. The dues included unpaid wages, and overtime payment for the time which he had to spend on the farm in addition to his 8 hour work day. The police was also informed lest the employer levelled false charges of trespass against the worker.

A few days later, five people, including two outside activists and Shivlal went to meet the employer who offered to pay Rs. 450 in all. This offer was discussed in a *Toli* and rejected. The others also felt that Shivlal should have made some of the demands while he was employed and raising them now was not fair. Future course of action was also discussed. Stoppage of work was ruled out because the union was seen to be weak. Another meeting with the employer seemed to be the only way out. It took place a month later. At this meeting a settlement was reached for Rs. 1,300. The employer, it happened later also, made attempts to build rapport with the outsiders by talking to them in English, a language which the workers present could

not understand. This also affected the attitude of the union in negotiations but not substantively. Most of the discussion was done by the outside activists.

Successful completion of the case increased people's enthusiasm for the union but affected Shiv Lal negatively. He stopped comming to the *Tolis*. The others criticised this behaviour but did not know what to do about it.

Case study no. 2

This case involved two workers who demanded an improvement in their service conditions and wages and got it without being dismissed. It is a unique case also in that the concerned workers played the most active role. They were the only employees at the farm and were getting the salary of Rs. 180 p.m. They not only had to work long hours and live in substandard housing but also had to put up with abusive behaviour on the part of the employer. On one occasion, there had been a theft in the farm and a tin sheet was stolen, for this the employer had deducted Rs. 40 each from their wages. There was not enough skilled work available on the farm for two people. Therefore, the union decided to seek the minimum wages for the semi-skilled category and other benefits such as leave, overtime, proper accommodation. The union wrote a letter and also asked the employer to modify his behaviour towards the workers. The employer tried his best to intimidate the union activists, was most abusive during the only telephone conversation that they had with him and refused to have a meeting with them. The employer did not respond to the union; however, he visited the farm and raised the wages to Rs. 200 p.m., asked the workers not to work beyond 5.00 p.m. and was most polite with them. His only request was that the workers should not go to the union. The workers accepted the wage increase although it was not what had been demanded. The employer in turn made them sign an illegal undertaking that they would not have anything to do with the union. The workers at any rate had understood that if it had not been for the union they would not have achieved anything because their demands in the past had brought them only abuses. They continued to come for the *Toli* meetings where their fears

regarding the undertaking were allayed. This case was a morale booster for all the workers and increased the confidence of the two workers tremendously who felt perfectly capable of dealing with their employer in the future on their own.

Case study no. 3

This case involves a worker who found his services terminated upon his return from four days' leave. He had been wroking on the farm for almost a year at a wage of Rs. 225 p.m. The employer had also hired another worker in his place, who had started working and living there. Four people including Shyamlal, the concerned worker, and two outside activists, went to meet the employer. The demand was for the payment of arrears totalling Rs. 1906. The employer charged the worker with inefficiency and tried to intimidate him into withdrawing the claim. As a result, a formal letter was sent to him. He refused to acknowledge receipt. Yet another letter was ignored. Shyamlal, in the meanwhile, found another job. Since the farm had been vacated by him, there was not much scope for direct action and his getting another job had also lowered the interest of other workers. In fact, quite a number saw him as being inefficient and lazy and were not willing to really fight for his cause. The idea of going to court was also given up since it required a prolonged and time consuming procedure to which Shyamlal himself was not agreeable. He, however, kept on feeling that direct negotiations would bring some results. Another meeting was tried. This was worse than the first one and after that, the employer told the union to go to the courts since he had nothing further to say. All except Shyamlal lost hope. He kept asking the activists to try the direct approach again. Finally, one outsider went with him to meet the employer. Surprisingly enough, he agreed to pay Rs. 125, a mere pittance in comparison to the original demand, but that was accepted. The most positive outcome of the case was the change in Shyamlal's attitude who became very active in the union.

The activists were also educated in the process since it was discovered that, in addition to their right as workers, those occupying quarters on the farm had tenancy rights also.

Case study no. 4

This case was taken up at the end of 1979 and is a good example of the mistakes made at the initiative of the inexperienced outside activists. In terms of financial achievements, it was rather successful but its achievement in terms of gains in people's unity and consciousness are questionable. Jagdish had been employed on the farm for only four months when his services were terminated. His salary of Rs. 250 p.m. had never been paid. He had been paid some money from which he was expected to incur expenditure for the farm also. At the time his services were terminated, his arrears including wages in lieu of notice amounted to Rs. 2001. Some union activists met the employer in this regard. Only a heated exchange could take place since the employer was drunk. This exchange left the union activists angry. At the *Toli*, it had been decided that Jagdish should not vacate his quarters. The employer hired a new worker to replace Jagdish and instigated him against Jagdish. The *Toli* asked Jagdish to persuade the new worker to join the protest. Instead of joining it, he lodged a police complaint against Jagdish charging him with obstruction of duty. Soon after, Rs. 100 were stolen from Jagdish and he filed a complaint against the new worker with the police. This damaged the relations between the two beyond repair and left no possibility of taking cohesive action on the farm itself. The union had not been sensitive enough to the fears of the new worker.

At any rate, the union continued to demand a meeting with the employer. The circumstances were also in favour of the union since the employer owned a jewellery shop in a posh locality in the city. Holding demonstration there would have pressurised the employer no end. This was considered and plans were being made. In the meanwhile, the employer agreed to meet the union. This meeting caught the activists unawares. The employer arrived on the scene with a number of supporters which included some workers also. Many of the union members were also present because the meeting was taking place at the farm. The employer started by charging Jagadish with dishonesty and when it did not pay dividends, turned around and told him that if he was willing to get the union out of this he would

make a settlement, otherwise he would deal only through the courts. Not only Jagdish but the union activists as well were totally unprepared to deal with the situation. Understanding Jagdish's dilemma, the union activists left the scene. The employer agreed to pay Jagdish Rs. 850, an offer which was acceptable to him. Later, the outsiders tried to convince the workers that it was only because of the union that such a generous settlement had been reached but to counter this logic was the employer's contention that unionisation was only going to mean endless trouble for the workers from "reasonable" employers. It was later discovered that experienced trade unionists in such a situation would predict such a behaviour on the part of the employer and discuss with the workers beforehand about leaving the negotiation scene as a tactical measure to ensure speedy gains for the concerned worker and with no loss to union's prestige. Jagdish stopped coming to the meetings as soon as the settlement was reached.

Case study no. 5

This case dragged on for two years though it was one of the first ones taken up. Chhedi was quite an active member of the union and wanted to take up his case for salary enhancement and improvement in working conditions. He was the only employee on the farm and had been working there for almost six years at a salary of Rs. 150 p.m. He was never given any annual leave. In the summer of 1979 when the case was taken up, the tube well on the farm broke down and no repairs were made. In the middle of summer, thus, Chhedi's family had to realy on others even for drinking water. A letter was sent to the employer raising various demands including a raise in wages. The employer in this case was an industrialist living in a different city who used to deal with Chhedi through his local representatives. When Chhedi went to collect his salary after the letter had been sent he was served with a notice. The union decided that Chhedi should not leave the premises until all his dues had been settled. The union wrote another letter listing out the arrears. At that time, the outside activists had a mistaken notion that they could demand only 6 months' arrears. In Cheddi's case, this amounted to Rs. 9,500. In response to

this, the local representative of the employer met the union representative and made an offer of Rs. 750 while disputing the legality of demands. The union in turn approached a lawyer who advised that arrears for the entire period of employment could be sought. These amounted to Rs.33,000 When the union tried to deal with the representative next, he refused to discuss the case and asked the union to approach the employer directly. The employer retaliated by stopping the payment of Chhedi's salary and serving him with a legal notice containing many charges including that of unauthorised occupation of the premises. He also decided not to cultivate the land. Given all this, the union was in a very weak position. There seemed to be no effective means of getting justice. Finally, it approached the labour law implementation machinery and the case was settled through conciliation two years later at Rs. 3,500. In respect of the demand which was Rs. 33,000 and constituted the bare minimum of Chhedi's arrears, the settlement was indeed very low. Conciliation which took two years, at any rate, is the first step in settling labour disputes and one which allows one party to prevent the use of lawyers by the other. If this settlement had been unacceptable, the matter would have gone to the courts and gone on endlessly with the system being heavily loaded against the union. In the intervening period, Chhedi had to suffer many hardships but this did not alienate him from the union. In fact, his sense of solidarity increased and he started attending the meetings of the other workers in the area as well.

Reflections

Over two years, there was no significant growth in the AFWU movement in the farms. Nor were any substantial gains perceived in the preparedness of the workers to take up these issues themselves. *Tolis* kept varying in size and for short periods they also stopped functioning. The literacy work was also unable to make much headway. There seem to be many reasons for this:

Environmental conditions

The employers constituted a powerful group not particularly interested in production and were physically unapproachable

in many cases. This limited significantly the ability of the workers to adopt means and strategies such as work stoppages etc. which they could themselves organise. This also required use of the skills available with outsiders such as high degree of literacy, contacts among the press, with lawyers etc. to be used frequently. Secondly, each farm employed only 1-2 workers which meant that although most of them had poor service conditions, each situation, was different. Finally, the power differential between the employers and the workers was very large. While the workers were migrants and had nothing to bank upon, the employers had all the necessary connections in the bureaucracy, police and the press.

The activists

While the activists were a well meaning lot, there was a great distance between them and the workers, not only in terms of their backgrounds but also in the fact that they lived so far away from the workers. They had their own ideas of right and wrong. This was manifested in the way they responded to the employers plea that the workers had not been productive which left them at a loss in demanding overtime. Similarly, they wanted to consult a lawyer every time a letter was drafted. A significant pointer was the debate which took place in demanding a large sum of Rs. 33,000 for Chhedi because some of them felt that it would make the union an object of ridicule. Lack of experience also played a role as shown in Jagadish's case which in experienced hands could have brought gains for the union. Similarly, their lack of awareness of the law and reliance on past experience of AFWU without critical analysis, created problems. The background and occupations of the activists also added to the problems. They looked more like the employers than the workers and although had a good relationship with the workers in the AFWU, this must have made other workers doubt their intentions, particularly, with due propaganda on the part of the employers.

They believed in developing people's initiative but were unable to see methods which would lend themselves to this transfer initiative. In fact, sometimes in *Toli* meetings, they would get impatient and not even allow enough discussion and

contemplation on the part of the workers around the methods that were being used.

Finally, given the status of the activists, they at least managed to get a hearing in many places where the workers often failed. For example, in booking a complaint or report with the police. It is not to say that these agencies became helpful but it did take the workers a step ahead.

The workers

The condition of the workers as has already been said, was quite bad. Yet their present condition was a vast improvement over what they had contended with in their villages. This made them less prone to taking any risks except in rare cases such as in case study 2 and 5.

Most of them were illiterate and could not even work out what was owned to them by their employers let alone approaching labour law implementation machinery. Acquiring these abilities would have required sustained effort over a long period of time. Hence given the method of raising the demands and the complexity of the machinery, they were unable to become independent.

Despite all these, the efforts have not been given up. Now the effort is being made to build linkages with other workers in the area who could provide support to each other when needed.

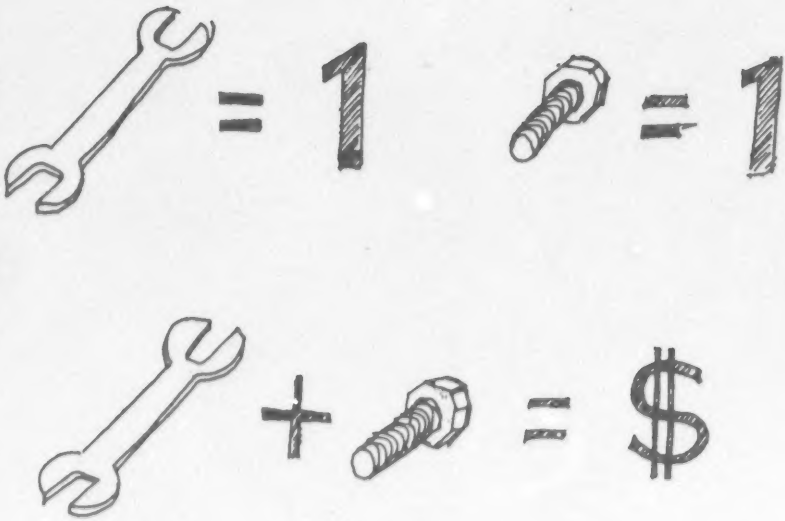
Research

The objective of this endeavour was never to specifically conduct research. It always had an action orientation. But this does not mean that new information was not generated, analysis was not done or that no learning occurred. In fact, there was constant search for data which would determine the course of action to be adopted for the given case. The entire background material of the case study is a result of data-gathering which occured unintentionally but mostly from the time spent by the activities in the area. Similarly, the information regarding employers came up during the meetings. Whenever it was collected intentionally, it was done specifically for action-planning. At times, different activists did feel that a systematic survey on the farm economics or migratory patterns of the workers would be

useful but these ideas were abandoned soon enough as not being worth the effort. None of the activists correctly knew even the exact number of farms or workers. Nor could any one pinpoint any percentages of any kind.

More important than the generation of new knowledge was an enhancement in the knowledge of activists and the workers. In a country where other surveys indicate that only 2% of the agricultural labourers are aware of the existence of the Minimum Wages Act, Rampur's farm workers would indeed form an exception. Similarly, the awareness of the entire group increased tremendously in other areas, i.e., knowledge of labour laws, government machinery, tenancy laws etc.

It could also be said that a more systematic research would have equipped the union far better to deal with day-to-day problems. For example, one may consider the manner in which information was gathered about legal issues. Whenever a case came up only the relevant portions of the acts were referred to and similarly the lawyers were consulted only for specific issues. This in Chhedi's case made the union come up with two different demands. Such weaknesses could easily have been avoided. This could be the case in other action oriented projects as well. A conscious effort would be required to overcome this.



PART III

REACTIONS

13

Ambiguities in Participatory Research

*L. Dave Brown**

The manifold potentials of participatory research are amply illustrated by earlier chapters in this book, and this chapter will not try to add to that catalogue. I will focus instead on "ambiguities" in participatory research—points at which disagreement and controversy have rumbled in the past and may be expected to erupt again in the future. Discussions of these issues have often generated more heat than light. But I believe such controversial areas are potential crucibles of new insight, understandings and action. Identifying, confronting, and transcending ambiguities and contradictions in present practice is a path to creating methods of inquiry and action beyond our present rudimentary arts we now have. So I focus here on ambiguities to pose issues for the future rather than list resolutions from the past.

I will discuss ambiguities in participatory research from the perspective of a researcher for two reasons. First, I am myself a researcher—often a participatory researcher, to be sure, but nonetheless socialized and experienced as a social scientist. Second, this book has been written by researchers. Most participants have little time for reading books about research methods and probably even less time for writing them. This is not to say that participant perspectives on participatory research would not be valuable, but those perspectives will not be strongly represented in this chapter.

I have identified four areas of ambiguity and controversy that seem important in the participatory research portrayed in

*This chapter is especially written for this book.

preceding chapters. Those areas include (i) the nature of participatory research objectives, (2) the relations between participants and researchers, (3) the choice of methods and technologies, and (4) the outcomes of participatory research activities.

Objectives : knowledge, awareness, or social change?

What objectives should participatory research pursue? There are several alternatives or combinations of alternatives possible. For example, a traditional objective of research has been increased *knowledge*, which enables explanation of events and phenomena previously poorly understood. Research designed to develop abstract knowledge is centrally concerned with issues of validity and relations to the larger scientific context. Research may also focus on the objective of increased *awareness*, so that researchers and participants recognize and engage more fully with the realities of their situations. Research activity that centers on awareness is particularly concerned with the personal relevance of issues and actions. A third possible objective for participatory research is *social change* based on the development of new information and understanding. Researchers concerned with social change attend particularly to issues such as distributions of power and wealth or the nature of social justice. Different research objectives imply quite different researcher concerns and orientations.

The objectives of participatory research remain ambiguous. Different investigators adopt different emphases and combinations of knowledge, awareness, social change and other objectives. Most of the authors in this volume accept enhanced participant and researcher awareness as an important objective. Some of those authors explicitly promote social change (e.g., Freire, the Oliveiras); others implicitly advocates ocial change objectives. Some explicitly reject the abstract understanding of traditional research as a useful objective (e.g., Freire); others implicitly reject that objective or accept it only in combination with others. Ambiguity about objectives may be further complicated by competing theoretical and ideological perspectives. Investigators may agree on the need for social change but propose very different analyses and means to that end.

How should ambiguities about the objectives of participatory

research be handled? I do not believe that dogmatic prescription of "correct" objectives is particularly desirable, even if it were possible at this point. The freedom to pursue multiple objectives and to adapt objectives to the situation at hand can foster cross-fertilization and creative mixtures that contribute to several ostensibly incompatible objectives.

But I also think it is important for participatory researchers to articulate as clearly as possible the objectives they pursue. Unclear objectives hamper development of appropriate approaches to inquiry, and they allow participants and researchers to ignore tensions and contradictions that merit exploration. Diverse but clearly articulated objectives may galvanize researchers and participants to create the new strategies for inquiry and action we desperately need. Ambiguity about the objectives of participatory research *in general* provides space and tension for creativity. Clarity about the objectives of *specific* participatory research projects mobilizes researchers and participants to solve the resulting dilemmas and contradictions.

The roles of participants and researchers

"Researchers" and "participants" may negotiate a variety of roles with each other in the course of a participatory research project. The role definitions that emerge greatly affect the outcomes of the project.

One pitfall in negotiating participant and researcher roles is Overemphasizing Differences. The differences between participant and researcher roles are made extremely clear, and similarities between them are accorded little recognition. In laboratory experiments on human behavior, for example, the roles of researcher and subject differ greatly in power, expertise, and autonomy, with the experimenter dominant in the situation. Participatory researchers are typically wary of dominating participants (e.g., Le Brun, Colletta), but the potential always exists. Roles that overemphasize differences hinder effective use of resources from both parties by encouraging one party to surrender responsibility to the other.

Another pitfall is Overemphasizing Similarities. Differences between parties are not recognized, and researchers and participants act as if they are equal in all respects. Participatory

research sometimes suffers from role definitions that deny the differences between parties, and so hamper learning from each other. Researchers who insist on being "just another participant" may be as ineffectual as researchers who cannot step out of the laboratory experimenter role.

I think ambiguities about researcher and participant roles are best resolved in negotiations which recognize both similarities and differences. Similarities provide a foundation for communication and trust; differences offer possibilities for mutual learning and development. Researchers often have class backgrounds, educational and occupational experiences, and personal concerns very different from those of participants. Roles that distort the parties' similarities or differences reduce the flow of valid information between them and reinforce stereotyped interactions. The development of researcher and participant roles that permit two way influence may take time and effort (e.g., Swantz, Tandon, et. al.), but the rewards may be substantial in terms of mutual understanding and joint action.

In some circumstances the differences between researchers and participants may create serious conflicts. Draper, for example, reports disagreement that resulted in the researcher consciously subordinating his interests to those of the participants. In other circumstances, cooperation may be impossible. When researchers sympathetic to oppressed peoples seek information from elites, participatory research methods may produce little useful information. Such circumstances may require *adversarial* research strategies and tactics that assume fundamental conflict between the parties (see Oliveiras). Clarifying the different roles of researchers and participants may indicate appropriate strategies and tactics as well as create relationships for productive discussion.

The choice of methods and technologies

The methods appropriate to a given participatory research project depend in part on its objectives. When the objectives include contributions to abstract knowledge, the methods of social science may be appropriate; when personal awareness is an objective, methods from the field of education may be useful.

When social change is desired, technologies from political reform and revolution may be needed. Projects with mixed objectives may require methodological syntheses across different traditions.

Several authors in this volume have largely rejected the methods of "traditional" social science research. Tandon, Hall and Pilsworth and Ruddock have extensively critiqued the frailties of many social science technologies. On the other hand, some authors have noted the efficacy of those methods for maintaining the *status quo* and in serving the interests of elites (e.g., Freire, the Oliveiras). If traditional research methods contribute to the hegemony of the present elite, can participatory researchers afford to ignore those methods entirely? It seems to me that we should keep the door open to social science research technologies for two reasons: (1) to neutralize their contributions to an undesired status quo, and (2) to utilize them where possible for participatory research objectives. Some elements of survey research methodology, for example, can be adapted for use in participatory research projects—and other social science methods may also be suitably altered to fit participatory research assumptions.

More generally, I believe the lack of an "established" method and technology for participatory research encourages widespread borrowing and invention from many traditions. Participatory research may define itself in distinction to other social science traditions. But I think that continuing ambiguity about the methodology of participatory research is desirable. Participatory researchers can and should draw on social science, education, political movements, and any other activities that offer methods relevant to project objectives. It is the syntheses that emerge from this borrowing that will simultaneously vitalise participatory research and in turn enrich donor traditions.

The outcomes of participatory research

There is inevitably ambiguity about the consequences of a participatory research project, both in terms of short-term events and in terms of long-term consequences. These ambiguities flow from the interaction between researchers and participants, and from the interaction between research project and

the larger context within which it is embedded.

The events and activities of a participatory research project are by definition under the joint control of researchers and participants, in contrast to the preplanned and largely researcher-controlled events of laboratory experiments or survey research. Joint control makes it difficult for either party to predict project events before researchers and participants have negotiated their roles and their plans for the project. In Colletta's Indonesian experience, for example, the researchers found that their definition of "participation" was inconsistent with the local culture, and complex negotiations were needed to identify the "participants" who could join the researchers. The process of participatory research, in short, creates ambiguities about project definition and outcomes very early in its existence.

In the longer term, since participatory research often influences the behavior of participants, the project is likely to be influenced by difficult-to-predict responses from the larger context. Vio first describes the success of the Talco Peasant School in educating poor Chileans and then points out that researchers and peasants from the School were imprisoned after the overthrow of the Allende regime. Participatory research projects that mobilize the oppressed or otherwise redistribute power are never riskless enterprises. But researchers and participants who are not alert to the possibilities of external intervention may set themselves up for otherwise avoidable disasters. Participatory research that produces new behaviour contains seeds for project growth or destruction, and the blooming of those possibilities depends in part on the alertness of researchers to ambiguity about project outcomes.

Conclusions

I have suggested four critical areas of ambiguity for participatory research. Ambiguity about objectives offers freedom to innovate but calls for clarity about goals of particular projects. Ambiguity about the roles of participants and researchers poses the risk of reinforcing undesirable stereotypes, but offers opportunities for mutual learning. Ambiguity about methods opens a bewildering array of options but offers opportunities for invention and synthesis across many traditions. Ambiguity

about outcomes offers potential for catastrophe or triumph.

Participatory research is a concept of inquiry whose time has come. The diversity of perspectives and the variety of experiences reported in this volume bear witness to the world-wide relevance of the concept. The ambiguities I have discussed simultaneously present threats and opportunities, and resolving those ambiguities is the essential challenge to researchers and participants.

This Book is based on the realization that traditional methodologies of research in social sciences do not support development of the people and generation of knowledge is monopolized by a few trained professionals. It questions this monopolistic control over knowledge. Participatory research is seen as a contribution to the development of poor and marginal people. First part contains theoretical papers written by practitioners from a variety of countries. It also includes a number of case studies from several socio-economic and political contexts in the second part. This combination of theoretical and practical presentations from a number of developing and developed countries gives the book an international character and makes a valuable contribution to the ongoing search for new models and approaches to research as a contribution to development.

This book will be particularly useful to researchers, planners, development workers, and all those concerned with generating new insights and alternatives for development.

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